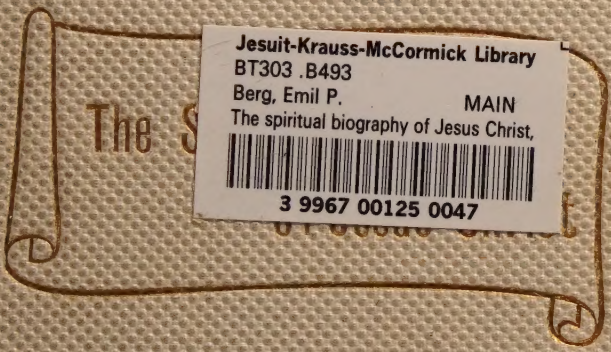

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# THE SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY OF JESUS CHRIST

# The Spiritual Biography of Jesus Christ

## According to the Saintly Essenes

Being Ideal Studies in the First Century of the Christian Era

By

Emil P. Berg

Author of "Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship," "God the Beautiful," "Where is Heaven?" Etc. Etc.

Vol. I

The Primitive Gospel

London
Arthur H. Stockwell
29 Ludgate Hill, E.C.
1911

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Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

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# INTRODUCTION

My dear Friend,—The present work is intended to be a companion volume to the one lately published, entitled "Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship," in which I sought to present an ideal sketch of the early life and training of our Saviour until he commenced his public ministry.

In this new work I have endeavoured to give another ideal sketch, dealing with the period in the first century A.D. when the collection of materials for writing the Gospels began to be taken up in earnest—and especially as to the supposed first or primitive biography from which the Synoptic writers afterwards drew very freely. An outline is also presented, suggesting the origin of the fourth Gospel and considering as to by whom it is likely to have been composed.

I must explain to you that it was to a great extent owing to a feeling of admiration for the small sect of the religious community of Essenes—which both Philo and Josephus praised so highly for their piety, wisdom, and learning—that I came gradually to associate this pious sect with Jesus.

If any one seeks to live back to these distant times of Christ, there appears to be no one (humanly speaking) to whom the credit can be given for having prepared our Lord and moulded his youthful mind for his high vocation, so much as these pious reformers and saintly devotees. Hence, out of a chivalrous desire and endeavour to give honour to whom honour is due, even although it may be late in the day for such purpose: yet for that reason I wrote my former book — "Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship."

My reason for penning the present work is somewhat similar. As you know, scholars were for long of opinion that the Gospel of Mark had the priority, and that the editors

of the other two Gospels had drawn largely from his work. Now, however, owing to the splendid scholarship and researches of eminent theologians in Germany, as well as in this country, it has been proved that Mark's Gospel is not original; but that he, as well as the other two, drew largely from a still earlier Gospel to which has been given the title Q, *i.e.* "Quelle, or Source."

It is at this point that I have taken up the argument and have sought to show that the author or authors of this "Q," or primitive Gospel, may reasonably be claimed to have been some of the saintly Essene scholars in the monastery in Palestine where I conceive Jesus had been brought up, and where he would be sure to have had many attached friends: who would be the first to try and preserve his memorable sayings and doings, and also to give a short outline of his life, especially for the benefit of the poor Jewish converts in Palestine. For such literary work and researches, these Essene scholars would be well qualified in every way.

The same train of thought has led me to locate the author of the fourth Gospel as having also been one belonging to the Essene community, which had its headquarters at Alexandria; hence Philo's speculations, which to a great extent underlie the teaching of the fourth Gospel, would be widely disseminated among the sect of Essenes—wherever they had their retreats, whether in Egypt or in the Holy Land.

You will see how I have tried in the present work to throw some light upon the first century of the Christian era, with its gradual formation of a religious literature—and more especially as to the spiritual biography of Jesus Christ.

I have drawn the material, partly from recorded reminiscences in the Gospel and elsewhere, and have partly recreated the past by the aid of the ideal faculty. In doing this, I have followed the example of the author of the fourth Gospel, who has evidently used his creative faculty very largely, in order to present a graphic and highly imaginative

memoir; thus making it above all a work of Art, where each recorded incident has a spiritual meaning, which will be found elevating, beautiful, and sanctifying, to all believers throughout all ages.

THE AUTHOR.

# THE SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY OF JESUS CHRIST

## THE ANNIVERSARY

In commencing our studies, which anticipate the compilation of the four Gospels, I must ask the reader to follow me once again to the sheltered monastery at Hazazon Tama. There, about twenty-eight years before, Jesus had left the Essenes to enter upon his Messianic mission; which unfortunately cost him his life, after the short period of but three years' teaching and healing.

Once more we find ourselves in the Essenes' little meeting-house, presided over by the still living and venerable Superior—who, in spite of his advanced age, has yet preserved a large share of his bodily and mental vigour.

Together with him on the raised dais, there are three other Essene monks; learned Rabbis from a distance, who have come to the monastery at the express invitation of the Superior.

The meeting-house this afternoon is full to overflowing, but alas! we miss nearly all the elderly brethren who were present at the solemn initiation of Jesus twenty-eight years before, and among whom were also our old friends Ananda and Baruch. In addition to those whom death has claimed, there were many others — especially younger members, who had left the monastery and joined the disciples of Jesus, some during his lifetime and others after his tragic death. The bulk of the audience is therefore composed of brethren who have only heard of the celebrated brother Jesus; but they have all learned to admire him, knowing also how greatly beloved he had been by the venerable Superior and the past generation of monks among whom Jesus had lived during so many years.

A solemn commemoration service had been held in the morning, attended not only by the

whole brotherhood, but also by many from Engedi, and even from longer distances, who had learned to love and admire Jesus during his ministration among the poor, the sick, and the dying, in these districts, when he was a member of the Essenes' brotherhood. The venerable Superior preached an impressive sermon, extolling the virtues and the lasting services which Jesus had rendered to humanity by his life's mission of love, service, and sacrifice. In spite of the disaster which had overtaken him and his cause, yet the name of Jesus, he believed, would live in the heart and affection of all his followers, even to the end of time.

As the brotherhood are now again assembled, the Superior, after prayer, opens the meeting by saying:—

"Beloved brethren, as you are all aware, we are holding this week memorial services in honour of our late beloved brother Jesus, who to-day, exactly twenty-five years ago, was crucified by the Roman procurator as a rebel against Cæsar; and even worse,

he was condemned by the Sanhedrim Court as a blasphemer of Jehovah. The lofty mission in the cause of truth, love, and righteousness, which Jesus took up as the Jews' spiritual Messiah, came thus to an early, abrupt, and tragic end. As you all know, the result was that his followers were scattered abroad at the persecution, instigated by our highest Court in Jerusalem, which tried at once to stamp out the so-called pernicious and blasphemous doctrines of Jesus. It looked, indeed, for some time, as if his mission would end in a complete fiasco, to the triumph of his enemies. However, we know also that sooner or later truth will rise from the grave, and this is exemplified in the present case, for we find that although the bulk of our nation at home has up to now rejected Jesus and his claims as the expected spiritual Messiah of the Jews, yet, in the Diaspora, among our own countrymen, the progress has been remarkable—and even more so perhaps among Gentiles in Asia Minor, in Italy, and even in Greece, who are outside the Jewish fold.

"That the progress of the peaceful and loving message of Jesus as the true Messiah, proclaiming the fatherhood of Jehovah and the brotherhood of man, with love, truth, and righteousness as humanity's guiding stars: that this message of hope and Good-spell will go on conquering the world, is my full conviction. But of course time is required, and perhaps even millenniums may pass; for only a small part of the world, which as a whole is sunk in barbarism, superstition, and ignorance, is as yet ripe to receive the lofty message and conform to its call of self-sacrifice in the service of God and of humanity, arising from love and a whole-hearted consecration to our Heavenly Father.

"Now, my object in having invited our three brethren from Galilee, Jerusalem, and the Diaspora, to pay us a visit for some days at our memorial services, is to learn from them what progress has been made in their respective provinces in spreading the mission of the spiritual Messiah; also to learn something authentic of the oral teaching current,

not only as regards the actual discourses of Jesus, which may be still preserved, but likewise records of his life and his healing work amongst the people with whom he laboured.

"Seeing that exactly twenty-five years have elapsed since his lamented death, I think the time has come when an effort should be made to reduce the oral reminiscences of the words and acts of Jesus into writing: so as to give them a more permanent form, that they may become a true standard for the faith, morals, and expectations of the new sect. The necessity for this is seen when you bear in mind that there are already a great many wonderful stories in circulation among our common country folk, whom you know are so grossly superstitious. Therefore, such a divine mission as Jesus claimed is not likely to gain ground among them unless something was done by him, or reported as having been done by him: to confirm by mighty signs and wonders his claim as being not only God's prophet and spiritual King, but also a divine Son and representative of the Highest.

"Let us therefore divide the subjects which will be brought before us in these memorial services and addresses in the following manner. Let us study:—

The family pedigree of Jesus.

His birth and childhood.

His reported discourses and teaching.

His famous works of healing.

His betrayal, trial, judgment, death, and subsequent events.

What evidences there are of events in the life of Jesus having been prophesied in the Old Testament.

What prospects there are of the triumph of the Messiah's mission through the world.

"As we have the pleasure of having our friends with us during the whole week, we shall have plenty of time each afternoon or evening to discuss these subjects at our leisure. I shall now call upon our dear brother Simeon, to take up the first subject upon which we must concentrate our thoughts —seeing that, especially in the case of the

expected Messiah, it is necessary to know upon what ground of proved relationship Jesus could have claimed his lofty pretensions. All feel that the Davidic descent of Jesus is essential to his legitimacy as Messiah. You know also that all patriotic Jews, who are descendants from noble or illustrious families, keep with great care private records of their descent from generation to generation as their greatest treasures.

"We know also that at the time of Ezra there were national registers, which were of great value to the Jews after their return from Babylon in enabling them to regain their former inheritances. These served, therefore, as title-deeds to the family possessions. Now this has continued ever since, even to our own days. It is even yet useful in many ways, in order to occupy offices of importance whether in Church or State—leaving alone the honour of being able to prove that one belongs to a family of renown in times of old; this, as you all know, is a sure passport to all polite society and to

the regard, help, and sympathy of all good people: for the aristocracy of 'noble blood' necessarily ranks, after all, as the highest. You know that in this respect the Jews consider they hold the foremost place in the whole world, and I believe that their claim is not unfounded."

Simeon from Galilee now rose to address the audience. A tall, ascetic-looking man, with keen features, who spoke rapidly in the Galilean's broadest guttural dialect, he was hard to understand by some of the high-born and well-educated Essenes who belonged to Judæa, especially those from Jerusalem or Hebron, where the purest Aramaic was spoken.

Simeon addressed the gathering thus. He said:—

"As regards the family and the pedigree of the winsome but unfortunate enthusiast, known in his daily life under the Aramaic name of Jeshua, or in Greek as Jesus, and believed by many, especially after his death, to have been the spiritual Messiah or Christ: I have been

unable to get any reliable information, except that he belonged to a poor family at Nazareth, where he was reported to have been born, the father being a carpenter; and that the eldest son had followed the same Guild trade for some years after he grew up and until his apprenticeship expired, after which he disappeared from Nazareth for many years.

"All else that I could learn at Nazareth, which town I visited not long ago, is summed up in this: that the whole family, more than twenty years ago, had left the locality. The mother was reported as having died at Bethsaida (the fishing hamlet near Capernaum), where she lived for several years and was well cared for by a devoted family of some well-to-do fisherfolks living there, apparently near kindred. The brothers and sisters of Jesus, who were living at Nazareth at the time when he met a criminal's degrading doom, were shown great hostility and indignity by the clique of priests: for Nazareth, as you know, is the centre of one of the priest circuits, and therefore very bigoted. These stirred up the

common people against them, owing to their near relationship to Jesus. Hence, when the active persecution broke out in Jerusalem a few years afterwards, which as you know spread to all the provinces and caused the imprisonment, fines, flogging, or even the death by stoning of many of Jesus' followers: the sisters and brothers of the Messiah, being thrown out of the Synagogue, in order to save their lives fled—some to Cochaba and Samaria, others to Pella in Perea, many even to the large cities in the Diaspora in Asia Minor. But where in these foreign countries, nobody knows. Thus if you go to Nazareth, not one of the family is found living there.

"After making some inquiries, I found the 'Pedigree-maker,' who in Nazareth, as in all our towns, is a man of some importance. He happened to be also the Chazan or official of the Synagogue, a man well advanced in years. Owing to his official position, he was well qualified for the post in making up or checking people's pedigrees; seeing he also kept the

official local registry, which was affiliated with the large central one in Jerusalem.

"Upon my inquiry, he told me that before leaving Nazareth, the brothers and sisters of Jesus had called and asked him to certify their grandfather's pedigree table (Yihus), that they might take it with them, as they were forced to remove to other places for safety. You know, as already stated, that the pedigree roll of an illustrious family is an introduction of great value in moving to a new town; more especially in this case, where the grandfather and their mother could claim and prove being descendants of the aristocratic, yea princely, family of King David—and, indeed, their deceased father could have done the same. Seeing, however, that these persecuted and innocent people could not afford to pay the fees, he gave each a short certificate, and attached it to their pedigree rolls. In reply to my query, the Chazan told me, however, that if I would pay him sufficiently, he would draw up a full pedigree list from the official registry, and have it confirmed from the

Registry house at Jerusalem. He promised that he would go back not only to King David and to Abraham, but even to Adam himself, the first man in the world. To this I gladly consented, and a couple of weeks later he sent me the pedigree of Heli, who was the father of Miriam and the grandfather of Jesus; hence you will see it refers chiefly to the maternal line of Jesus.

"I have this list with me, and will gladly give any of you permission to make a copy of it, as I did lately to one of Paul's companions—by profession a physician, called in Greek Loukas, or abbreviated Luke—whom I happened to meet, and who belonged originally either to Antioch or Philippi. He told me that he had also begun collecting materials from a large number of oral traditions or legends floating about, and a selection of which he intended to commit to writing in Greek—this language being most useful in the Diaspora, where practically all educated Jews knew it fully better in literature than Aramaic or other provincial dialects. When completed,

these rolls would comprise some of the most memorable sayings and teachings of Jesus, along with an outline of his career and the many wonderful deeds of healings which he had performed, and by which he became so famous—especially in Galilee, which was the centre of his activity.

"Luke was very interested in the pedigree roll from Nazareth which I showed him, and he told me that he intended to include it in the memoirs if I gave him permission. This, of course, I did very gladly. Luke also told me that there was a growing need for a systematic outline of the life of Jesus, seeing it would enable the catechisers to have a fixed guide in giving religious instructions to their converts, and that it would be of service for use in public worship. It had been put off from time to time, because at first it was expected that the Lord Jesus would return at any moment in the clouds of heaven, as promised by him and believed by all. Now, however, seeing that nearly two dozen years had elapsed with no sign from heaven of a near advent,

the Apostles who still lived had come to the conclusion that the second coming would not likely take place until a hundred years, or perhaps even a whole millennium, had passed after the death of Jesus; hence, in the interval, it would be prudent to carry out the promised work of writing a memoir of Jesus, for which he was now making some preparations in various quarters.

"Now to resume our subject. If you care to study the genealogical table which the Pedigree-maker at Nazareth made for me, you will find that he has based it upon the sacred number 'seven' and multiplied it eleven times, say $11 \times 7$; in all, 77 names. The study of the mystery or secret significance of *number* is termed 'Gematria,' or in Greek 'Isopsephiam.' To this the fixed number in the pedigree has also likely some reference, although unknown to me.

"The list of names does not, however, appear quite correct at first glance; but this may partly have arisen from the fact that many narrow and pious Rabbis are of opinion that

the Messiah's pedigree should not include the series of the ungodly Kings in Israel; hence the Pedigree-maker has left them out and drawn up the list through a different branch of David's family. They conclude this from the denunciation and rejection of Jehoiakim and his seed (see Jeremiah xxii. 28–30, xxiii. 5, xxx. 9, xxxiii. 15–17, xxxvi. 30). I find also that the list of names has been selected in an arbitrary way. For instance, he has selected 20 names from Adam to Abraham; 20 names are pre-exile; 20 names are post-exile; leaving only 17 names from David to Joseph's son.

"In other ways, though, this list is interesting; for, as the Pedigree-maker explained to me in his epistle, it goes back to Adam, in order to affirm:—

"1*st*. That the Messiah was to descend from the 'seed of the woman,' as foretold of old; hence it became necessary to trace the natural pedigree through the mother, as well as through the father of Jesus.

"2*nd*. Adam stands for the human, as op-

posed to Abraham = the national, ancestor; this being another reason for having him also included in the list.

"*3rd.* Many Jews expect, as you know, that the Messiah is to be the 'second' Adam from heaven. For this additional reason, the first Adam also appears in the list; as they are both closely related.

"Another reason why the Pedigree-maker included Abraham was to remind us that while Abraham was the father of promise, the Messiah was to be the son of its fulfilment. The Pedigree-maker further explained, as mentioned already, the necessity of the younger line by David being taken through his son Nathan, in preference to the one through Solomon; hence, Mary claims her descent from David through this royal prince. Now her own father was Heli, and thus Joseph was the son-in-law, and Jesus the grandson, of Heli, on the mother's side. She was thus the heiress both to the name and to her father's estate. Having no brother, it became necessary, and a legal duty (as the two

families were in close proximity of relationship), that by an adoption Joseph, her husband, should be made the legal son of her father Heli, in order that the succession might thus pass through him to his eldest son by her. In this way was preserved from extinction the house of Heli, the descendant of King David.

"These are all the remarks I think it necessary now to make regarding the pedigree from Nazareth. What was more interesting to me, however, was to secure the father's pedigree, which I was told could best be got at Bethlehem, where they believed that Joseph's family had been residing for several generations. I went therefore to the latter place, before coming to this, and was successful in my search; but this pedigree-maker was only prepared to give me a short list, starting from Abraham, with which I had to be content. This list I have also with me here, and it is at your disposal. I may mention that a copy of this Bethlehem list I sent, as desired, to Matthew, one of the Apostles of the Lord;

who is, I believe, beginning also to collect materials for the purpose of compiling an outline of the life and work of the Master.

"I shall not weary my brethren by reading over the individual names. Let me only say that this list is arranged in three series, each twice of seven names; in all, forty-two names. These names are apparently made to correspond to the periods before, during, and after the occupation of the throne by David's family. The pedigree-maker, I find, has partly copied his table from Gen. iv. 18, Ruth iv. 18–22, and 1 Chron. ii. 10–14; while the heading of the phrase, "Book of Generation," has been taken from Gen. v. 1. If you double the seven series, the table contains:—

14 names from Abraham to David.
14 „ „ David to Jechonias.
14 „ „ Jechonias to Joseph's son.

Let me point out, however, that in this list, in its last column, there are only thirteen names instead of fourteen. In the Nazareth list, the corruption of the two names Ahaziah

and Uzziah with the same sound (Ozius) has been the cause of merging four generations into one. In the same way, the similarity of Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin also led to the blending them both into the name Jechonias. Consequently there ought to be eighteen generations, while the Bethlehem list only gives fourteen. Salathiel and Zorobabel are included, to find a place in the lists for the two famous names.

"You will see, thus, that both the lists are only partially correct, but they are sufficient for all practical purposes, and at this long distance of time we must be content. Only let me point out that in this list Joseph is called the son of Jacob, which has arisen by diverting the line of pedigree in Zerubabel. The one is, therefore, by actual descent; the other, as said, by legal heirship, say the line by which the inheritance went. According to this view, the father of Jesus was the son of Jacob, of the line of Solomon; and at the same time, as we saw, he became the adopted son, and also the son-in-law, of Heli,

of the line of Nathan by marriage with the heiress Mary, who became the mother of Jesus. Bear in mind that in very ancient times the genealogies were reckoned from the maternal side; only later was the paternal side used as it is now. These two pedigrees can therefore be reconciled in the way mentioned, both lines passing through David; which is the main thing, and as such I must leave them with you.

"It is claimed that Jesus must have been born at Bethlehem, because it was prophesied in Micah; and probably Matthew will take this view, as his memoirs will rely so much, from what I hear, upon the prophetical forecasts.

"Let me now sum up. The result we have arrived at is, that the parents of Jesus could truly claim for themselves and their offspring a Davidic descent; hence, Jesus was, in a double sense, of the family of King David. In law, and in fact!

"Therefore, in the way that I understand these tables Jesus in his own person reconciled

these opposite views; for the two lists which I have procured go to prove that both naturally, and by adoption, he was the son of Abraham and David. This suggests, therefore, that the many prophecies about the coming son of David may very well be referred to him as the expected Messiah.

"I know that this has been rather a prosaic subject, perhaps, with which to start our discussion, but it was absolutely necessary. For unless it could be proven satisfactorily by the genealogy (Toledot) that Jesus actually had a royal descent, all his other qualifications or claims would have been of no value whatever; and he might rightly have been denounced as an impostor."

The Superior, after some complimentary remarks, said:—

"I believe our brother Simeon is quite correct, and that he has solved the apparent discrepancies quite satisfactorily. Indeed, I would have been disappointed if it had been proved that Jesus had been under a misapprehension as to his being a descendant of

King David; for I know that it was one of his most cherished convictions, which had been imparted to him at home as being beyond all argument, that he was a descendant of a long line of prophets, priests, and kings, even the direct heir of the throne of King David, although the fact was kept private for reasons of prudence. I will therefore propose that we adopt these two lists of genealogies as the most reliable ones to be now obtained, and use these as the foundation upon which the memoirs of Jesus will be recorded—keeping each, of course, strictly separate.

"In closing the opening discussion, let me say that in looking over these two lists, it seems to me that the Bethlehem pedigree should be most readily accepted in Judea, and among our own countrymen in the Diaspora; whereas the Nazareth pedigree ought to find greatest favour among the converts in the province of Galilee. It ought also to be more acceptable to those Gentiles who join the new sect: because, while the

Bethlehem roll only goes to Abraham, the one from Nazareth embraces all mankind—not only here on earth, but also humanity in its divine aspect as a Son of the Highest, represented on earth by Jesus as the Messiah. In other words, while the one pedigree restricts the mission of the Messiah to the Jews only, the other opens the door wide to the whole human race; hence, to Paul, and others like minded, who have turned to the Gentiles in Asia Minor and elsewhere to preach to them our Messiah as being not merely the Saviour of the Jews, but also the Saviour of the whole world: to these intrepid missionaries, this pedigree will suit admirably; and I am glad our brother Simeon has given a copy of it to Luke, who is an attached friend and travelling companion of Paul—being, as most of you know, a converted Gentile of culture, who has had a liberal education. He is sure to use it to the confirmation and spread of the 'Glad Tidings,' abroad among the Gentiles, and also among the Jews living in the Diaspora.

"I verily believe that these 'glad tidings' of God's Fatherhood, and the brotherhood of man, with love as the dynamic power, will be the chief factors in the future progress of the world. This splendid faith will burst all national and racial bounds; it will penetrate as a blessing into every stratum of society, and will work for its advancement, holiness, and happiness throughout all ages, even to the end of the world.

"Before we close our meeting, let me impress upon all present that every Essene ought to take the warmest interest in the progress of the new sect which Jesus started, and for which he died on the cross. We ought to do it, because he was the mouthpiece of the spiritual teaching and aspiration of the Essenes. In him our sect will start upon a new career, which in God's providence may spread over the whole earth. Our society may be blotted out of existence, and forgotten by the world at large; but it will rise to a new life and victory under the banner of him, the dearly beloved brother, whom we recognised

as being the spiritual Messiah God had promised, and for whom the world was longing and waiting.

"Before we part, our brother Simeon has asked me to deduce one or two lessons from the subject under review. Let me therefore say that the chief lesson intended to be conveyed by the genealogies was, of course, to prove that Jesus descended from King David. There is, however, another lesson we may take to heart; and that is, that Jesus, as the Messiah, could trace his lineage back to the 'Son of God.' It is wonderful that all the world's previous Redeemers have been described as having also borne this title, 'Son of God'; so that, while on the one hand they all belonged truly to humanity, they were at the same time also related to Divinity—and that, too, in the nearest and dearest of kinship.

"Now, the mission of Jesus is remarkable for this: that he does not claim the title of Son of the Highest exclusively for himself, as was the case with all the previous Saviours;

but he claims this also for his followers, for they are all sharers with him in the same heavenly and loving relationship. Indeed, we may go the length of saying that the whole of humanity may be claimed to be Sons of God, all children of the Highest. This imparts dignity; yea, it throws a halo of glory and honour over every soul of man, let it at present be ever so mean and debased. For wonderful is the revealed truth that there are elements of divinity in each and all of us, whether in potentiality or already developed here to a smaller or greater extent. This conception, in proportion as it is being realised, will by-and-by give the death-blow to the curse of slavery and cruelty, to war and bloodshed; for it will introduce and emphasise the glorious truth of a brotherhood among all people and nations, irrespective of race, colour, or creed.

"Upon such a foundation may therefore be founded the 'Universal Religion,' for which all devoted souls have been longing, where God is worshipped as our Heavenly Father,

humanity as His offspring, and each member is sharing in a common and loving brotherhood as outlined by Jesus—serving each other in the bond of love, peace, and mutual co-operation, for the welfare of all mankind!"

## THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

The brethren met the following day at the appointed hour, when the Superior opened the proceedings, after prayer, by saying:—

"Some of our brethren have pointed out to me that there are a large number of Ebionites and Nazarites, of whom you know the bulk of the followers of Jesus consists; and these are all convinced that the origin of the Messiah is shrouded in mystery, so that nobody knoweth whence he cometh. This belief is partly drawn from Isaiah liii. 8, and elsewhere, and is also found in some of the current literature treating of the Messiah's advent.

"Now, to all these people the two lists of genealogy we heard of yesterday will be of no

interest whatever; and therefore it may be as well if we leave them out in the meantime, while making a start in recording reminiscences during the life of the Messiah. It was to these poor but devout people that Jesus joined himself when on earth; and it is therefore chiefly for their benefit that we now begin to collect materials, so far as it can be recovered, of the life and teaching of their Saviour.

"All the same, we ought certainly to preserve these two pedigree lists, because many Jews of education may be converted by studying them. No doubt, also, both Paul and Simon Peter, with their large following of zealous disciples in the Diaspora, who have been sent out as missionaries, will find the pedigree lists most useful in their preaching tours to the Jews in the dispersion. It strikes me also that these rolls of genealogy will become very valuable to future generations, for by-and-by it will likely be quite impossible to find reliable people capable of making up such pedigrees.

"Now, leaving this subject, I shall call upon our dear brother Reuben to speak to us. He is a far-travelled and a learned brother student, and he has lived long in the Diaspora. I am curious to learn what is taught there regarding such subjects as the birth and childhood of our Messiah, because various rumours of a miraculous nature are afloat—some of them absurd and degrading. Our late Buddhist friend, Ananda, held also peculiar views upon this subject, drawn from his own scriptures; which some of you may have heard from his own lips at his lectures, before he passed to his rest. All this gives additional interest to the lecture to which we are to listen."

Reuben now began to address the brethren. He was a fluent speaker in Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. He also possessed the polish of a well-educated man who had lived for years as a student in Alexandria. After expressing his delight at seeing at last the well-known and beautiful retreat of Hazazon Tama, and sitting at the feet of their far-famed and

wise Superior, he took up his subject in the following way:—

"My beloved brethren, the subject allotted to me is, as you have heard, the events connected with the birth and childhood of the Essene's Messiah; and although it looks very simple, yet, as I proceed, you will find it beset with formidable difficulties, chiefly owing to preconceived notions. I understand, however, that our esteemed brother Simeon, when lately visiting Nazareth and Bethlehem, made full inquiries on this subject; and perhaps he will therefore kindly give us the result of his inquiries, before I mention the result of my own studies."

Simeon thereupon said: — "Our friend Reuben is quite right. Both at Bethlehem and Nazareth I made particular inquiries and interrogated old people in both towns, who were either acquainted directly with Jesus' parents and himself or through some of their descendants and kinsfolk. In not one instance, however, could I learn anything regarding either Mary or Joseph, or their child,

which had the slightest semblance to anything of an unusual or miraculous character. If there had been anything of this nature, all these honest people would have known or heard of it. I think, therefore, that there is not the slightest foundation for these rumours; but, all the same, I believe there are many miraculous stories in circulation among the country folks, chiefly emanating from Galilee, where the Messiah spent most of his time. All of these are, however, palpably absurd, more or less childish, and of pure imagination. If our brother Reuben can enlighten us as to the sources of these and other wonderful stories, I am sure it would be of the greatest interest to us all."

Reuben now took up the thread of his remarks, by saying:—

"I am very gratified to get the information from our brother Simeon, and I need not say that it is welcome news to me. I shall therefore treat with more freedom the various stories bearing on the subject in hand, which I know are promulgated in the Diaspora. I

will seek to put it in a narrative form, which may be of more interest to our brethren.

"Nearly two years ago I visited the large and wealthy city of Antioch, where, as you may know, the civilisation of Rome and Greece are meeting the Oriental wisdom and its ancient faiths. Owing to being not only a city of culture, but also of trade, enterprise, and pleasure, the city has drawn to itself myriads of people from all quarters, among whom you may imagine our countrymen are in large numbers and have a very flourishing colony. Antioch is therefore a city of a cosmopolitan character, for all religious sects are equally welcomed and protected under the tolerant ægis of Rome. Now, seeing the Jews represent both number and wealth, you will not be surprised to hear that they have several splendid synagogues at Antioch, built by the free-will offerings of the people and without help from Jerusalem. Well, to come to my story.

"Upon my arrival at Antioch, I called first upon our Essene brethren, who, by their

industry, plain living, and saving habits, are all thriving; and, as you know, they live by having all their goods in common, a sort of communistic society — so that no poor or necessitous are found among them. In this system they think is the only true ideal of society to be found. As you know, they keep entirely to themselves, and indeed are forced to do so: for the orthodox party of their countrymen despise them, and with the pagans' licentious customs they will have nothing to do. The Essene brethren in Antioch, as in other places in the Diaspora, I found to be enthusiastic believers in your Essene Messiah, and claim him as their own. They will have nothing to do, however, with the emissaries of Paul, who preach the Messiah as having been a sacrifice for the sins of the world, to appease the anger of Jehovah.

"Thus you see that among the followers of the Essene Messiah there are already two sects; indeed, I may say three, for the converted Jews in Jerusalem insist upon circumcision

and Temple services, with bloody sacrifices still obligatory, which Paul declares are now quite abrogated and useless for the soul's salvation. Well, in the course of my conversation they told me that one able and eloquent missionary, a Greek of the name of Apollos, had adopted their view as opposed to Paul and the Jerusalem believers. Apollos preached only the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man, based upon love and service; of which he declared the Essene Messiah was the true prophet and its spiritual King. But otherwise Apollos thought little of Paul's peculiar theories, which he considered unnecessary in a religion of the Spirit of Love. At Corinth, Paul and Apollos had been preaching for about six months, the former chiefly to the Jews, the latter to the Greeks. They appear to have had a dispute, however, after which they separated. Paul made his fourth visit to Jerusalem to be present at the Passover, and for charitable purposes; while Apollos went to Antioch, where he was for some months very successful

in his appeals both to the Jews and the Greeks—chiefly the latter, to whom his rare eloquence and charming personality helped not a little."

At this stage, the Superior rose, and said :—"Excuse me for interrupting you, dear brother, but this missionary Apollos, whom you speak about, is surely the same Greek from Alexandria who studied in the monastery of our brethren near the Lake Mareotis, and who afterwards came to reside here for nearly a year—chiefly to continue his studies under Ananda in the Oriental languages and religions, in which he was greatly interested. Apollos and Ananda became great friends, and I also came to admire and to love his charming personality. If he has been converted to the new faith, the seeds must have been sown here, as we two had many serious conversations about the expectation of the Jews of the near advent of their Messiah ; and we convinced him that all the prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus, whom we had recognised as the spiritual Christ—and we still feel certain that the world will sooner or later

justify our choice. I know that although Apollos is a Greek by birth and upbringing, yet he told me that his mother was a Jewess, from whom he had learned fully the faith and hopes of the children of Israel, in which she trusted all her days."

Reuben replied:—"Revered brother, you are perfectly correct in your surmises, and I shall come to treat of these a little later. Meantime, on hearing the high tribute I mentioned as paid to Apollos, I resolved to go on the first Sabbath day to the splendid new Synagogue, built by the rich Hellenised Jews, who were all liberal-minded people—where he had got permission to preach the lesson of the day, with reference to the new faith and its claim of acceptance by the Jews. When I arrived, I found the Synagogue full to overflowing. I had been to several such meetings before in other towns, both in Judæa and the Diaspora, where the missionaries of the new faith were preaching to large audiences. Most of these, however, after heated discussions, had ended in uproars; in fact, in some cases the Roman soldiers had to

be called in, to protect the disciples from actual assaults at the hands of the excited and fanatical Jews, who charged their opponents with being blasphemers of Jehovah and destroyers of the Jewish faith. In the Synagogue at Antioch, however, I was agreeably surprised to find everything going smoothly and pleasantly; the preacher, by his attractive personality and wonderful eloquence in the purest Attic Greek (not the common Greek dialect used in Asia Minor called Koine), having evidently thereby found sympathetic listeners among a number of otherwise argumentative and troublesome Jews.

"A further reason was, that the preacher, in announcing the advent of the expected Messiah, which he said had now taken place in the person of Jesus, told his hearers that he accepted all the prophetical Scriptures; in fact, that all the signs and prophecies must have been fulfilled in the coming of our Lord Jesus. Among many other prophetic passages he singled out was the one stating that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, born in

Bethlehem; that he would have to flee to Egypt as a child and return later; that there would be a great massacre of young children at Bethlehem when the Messiah was born; and lastly, that the Messiah would belong to Zebulon (now Galilee), all as foretold in the Scriptures, the exact passages of which he quoted with confirmation from the most celebrated Rabbis. He promised to come back on the following Sabbath to complete the rest of his explanations regarding the prophecies about the Messiah. The congregation thereupon broke up quietly, and seemingly wondered what was to follow, seeing he accepted these prophecies as applicable to the Essene Messiah.

"After the service was over, I approached the missionary of the new faith, in which I was intensely interested, and made his acquaintance. He was a handsome man with most winning manners, and evidently highly educated. He told me that his father had been a Greek, his mother a Jewess, but he was brought up in the Jewish faith by his mother, and learned the Greek faith from

his father; until he was converted to the new sect, for the progress of which he was most enthusiastic, and very hopeful. His name was Apollos. To my surprise, I learned that he had at one time visited Hazazon Tama, and stayed there for some time, sitting at the feet of the celebrated Ananda for linguistic purposes; also to be better acquainted with the wisdom of India, which he had heard exceeded all other countries. He was more than delighted to find in me an Essene student, and we made friends very quickly. He attributed his conversion to the new faith to our revered father Superior, whom he holds in greatest reverence.

"He told me that in the afternoon he had to carry on a discussion with Greek worshippers of Apollo, who had a beautiful temple at Daphne near Antioch, the most lovely spot in the whole district. He was sanguine of making converts among them, for he was going to tell them that both the Dionysian and Apollo cults had met their true fulfilments in the divine Saviour, Jesus.

After this was over, he had an appointment in Antioch during the evening, to be present at a secret or gnostic society of 'lovers of wisdom,' where Indian or Oriental lore was thoroughly believed in. There also his intention was to preach that all the wisdom of the East, including the noble faith of Buddha, had been fulfilled in the Lord Jesus, in which way he hoped to gain converts also among them. I was greatly surprised at all that I had heard; and, being keen to learn his methods of gaining converts, asked him to pay me a visit on the following day, which he accepted—and we had several lively and pleasant discussions, which I shall now communicate to you if you have patience to follow me.

"I asked Apollos to explain to me, in the first place, his method in trying to convert the Jews by the aid of prophecies. To this he replied:—

"'You will never convert the Jews otherwise; this is fundamental. If you do not know it, let me tell you that by diligent

search the Jewish Scribes and Rabbis have ascertained that passages in their Scriptures (say from Genesis to Malachi), which may be applied to the Messiah or to Messianic times, number as many as 456, which they distribute as follows, viz.:—

75 from the Pentateuch.
243 „ the prophetical writings.
138 „ the Hagiograph.

But over and above these, there have been collected from the teachings of various Rabbis more than 550 separate quotations, which all support the 456 Scripture passages. You will see, therefore, that the orthodox Jews have more than 1000 references to the Messiah and his reign, with which to confront the advocates of the new reformation introduced by our Lord Jesus, who claims to be the promised Saviour. It would appear impossible for the believers in the new faith to claim that all these 1000 references (many of which contradict each other) can be proved as having found their true fulfilment in their prophet from Galilee, and yet the orthodox

Jews insist upon this being done before they will accept the claim of Jesus. They are right, however, from their point of view; and I have taken up the challenge, and will admit that every one of the prophecies are fulfilled in our Lord Jesus—either actually, allegorically, or spiritually. In fact, I follow in the steps of the Essenes in these discussions, which I learned at Hazazon Tama, and by which the mouths of all cavillers can be stopped.'

"He continued:—'You will see from this that the life of the divine Jesus is being modified and built up—not only according to Jewish prophecies, but also according to Gentile teaching concerning their own deities, which must be transferred to the Jewish Messiah in order to make him acceptable to them. For instance, take the Virgin cult. It is found in Isaiah, but is also found, and much more distinctly, in the religions of the Egyptians, in India, in Chaldee, in Babylon, in Assyria, in Cyprus, in the Etruscans, in Persia, in Greece, and in Rome. Thus, only

upon this foundation is it possible to build, at least as far as the Roman world, with its manifold creeds, is concerned. The orthodox Jews will naturally wish to construct upon the foundation of the "genealogies of the Messiah" being traced to kinship with King David; but for the sake of the Gentile converts, the foundation must be placed on the Virgin cult in intercourse with the highest of all Divine Beings—he being the actual father, whose seed is therefore also divine and will be so to the end of time. Remember that the Messiah must have been pre-existent in heaven; he must also be a Son of God, and he must have a Virgin for an earthly mother. These are fundamental doctrines upon which the cult of the Essene Messiah must be built, in order to be successful in conquering the world.'

"I had to admit that his method was ingenious, and perhaps necessary for the success of his work; but I asked how he could have claimed on the previous day that all the prophecies had been fulfilled in our Lord

Jesus—such as the Virgin birth, the flight to Egypt, the massacre of children at Bethlehem, &c. Of all these I have heard nothing at all, and yet Apollos accepted them as a matter of course.

"To these remarks, he replied:—

"'Listen; what do you or I, or any one, know authoritatively of the events connected with the birth of a child by a poor unknown woman, who had to seek shelter in the stable of a country inn somewhere in Judæa? This happened more than fifty years ago. There are no doubt some traditions current, but I am told that they teem with miraculous stories. There are, it appears, puerile displays of magical powers attributed to the child Jesus, and these must be rejected as having no value whatever. But over and above all these hearsay stories, there stands, as an impregnable rock, the types and prophecies in the Jewish and other scriptures, which relate to the coming Messiah. It is with these that we have to do, if we wish infallible truth; and it is upon these that I

wish to build, in order to convert the world. The cult of Messiah will gradually incorporate the outstanding prophecies in all the world's religions. Indeed, only by associating our Lord Jesus with those found in the Jews' own scriptures, will it be possible to get any orthodox Jew to acknowledge him as having been the true Redeemer or Messiah for which Israel has been waiting. The preachers of the new reformation will therefore be quite within their rights if they boldly claim all and every prophecy uttered of old bearing upon the Messiah's reign, as having had at least its spiritual fulfilment in Jesus. If Jesus was really the true and spiritual Messiah, which I firmly believe he was, then the prophecies must all have been fulfilled in him. Whether we can prove it or not, we must claim every one of these as being applicable to Jesus, and fulfilled in him. This is the *crux* of the whole question.'

"'Well,' I answered, 'but how do you apply this to other faiths outside Judaism? For instance, how will this help you in arguing

with the Greek votaries of Apollo or Bacchus, or of the Gnostic teachers or devotees of Orientalism—such as those who teach the Indian systems of Krishna, Rama, and Buddha; also the very large number of believers in Mithraism, who live in every large city throughout the Empire?'

"Apollos replied: 'Just by working upon the same principle as with Judaism. With Paul I take our Lord Jesus to be not only the historical Messiah of the Jews, but the spiritual Christo, the universal Saviour of the whole world—found in many other religious faiths or cults under various other names; and hence in him all the prophecies and the symbols of every creed must therefore find their true fulfilment. Thus, for instance, last week I preached several times on the square outside the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on Mount Silpius, also outside the temples of Bacchus or Dionysius, besides frequenting the celebrated groves of Daphne, where is found the beautiful temple of Apollo. I told the various assemblies who thronged around me,

chiefly Greeks and Romans, that the events connected with their own divinities whom they worshipped were all fulfilled in our Messiah, and whom I would declare to them. To the Gnostics in their secret meetings I made the same affirmation regarding the divinities of the Mithrian, the Syrian, the Egyptian, and the Indian cults.'

"'But in this way,' I replied, 'you may introduce all manner of absurd stories and affiliate them with the Messiah's name, which would bring the new faith into ridicule and disgrace.'

"'Not so,' replied Apollos, 'because I only admit such prophecies, symbols, or signs which mutually confirm or throw light upon each other.'

"'Well,' I replied, 'I can hardly follow your argument.'

"'Have patience for a little, and I shall explain myself more clearly,' answered Apollos. 'Take the birth of the Redeemer by a Virgin as an example. This prophecy is found in practically all other religious systems of the

world, and therefore I take this as a prophecy attested and as an absolute fact, which must accompany the birth of all Redeemers, including Jesus. Hence, in sketching out the early life of our Lord Jesus, the facts I trust to are solely prophetical writings of Jews and Gentiles on this one subject, and they mutually illustrate each other.'

"'Well,' I replied, 'upon this foundation, tell me what can you learn about the early life of the Messiah? So far as I know, you will get little help from the Jewish Scriptures, except the few passages mentioned yesterday.'

"'Quite true,' retorted Apollos; 'I do not therefore draw my teaching entirely from Jewish sources, but I also draw them from the other religious faiths in the world, of whom the Essenes' Messiah must be the true fulfilment if he is to be the Saviour of the whole world—as I verily believe he is.

"'But now I shall give you my programme in outline,' he continued. 'I claim from prophecies in Jewish and Pagan Scriptures the following signs, which *must* accompany

and justify the Messiah's claims as a Saviour of the whole world:—

He must have had pre-existence in heaven.

He must be the Son of the Highest, and therefore of Divine origin.

He must have had a miraculous conception.

He must have been born of a Virgin, espoused by a Divine Parent.

His advent must be announced upon earth.

He must have been born when his mother was on a journey.

He must be born at Bethlehem.

There must be songs of Angels at his birth.

The Messiah must be recognised as a divine child.

The star of the East must shine at his birth.

The child must be visited by wise men and presented with costly gifts.

The child must be worshipped by aged saints.

The child's life must be threatened by the ruler of the day.

The child must flee to Egypt in order to escape his murderers.

There must have been a great massacre of children when the Messiah was born.

The Messiah must leave Egypt and dwell in Galilee.

When the child comes of age, he must go to Jerusalem and dispute with the learned men at the temple.

"'I might multiply these signs, but let the above suffice. Now, I can show you chapter and verse out of the world's Holy Scriptures that all these events must have happened to the Jewish Messiah, whether we can now get it confirmed or not by actual investigations. I believe it would be impossible to do so now, so many years after the event; and, as stated, the tales you hear among the country folks and others are tales of tradition or gossip, magnified and exaggerated, so that they are of no practical value whatever. Owing to this, we are forced to fall back upon the prophecies. These are trustworthy, because they are divinely inspired and cannot be gainsaid.

Upon these, therefore, we must build, because they are absolute truth.

"'I mention this more especially, because my friends Lucas and Matthew have asked me on my travels in Palestine to collect what information I could obtain, especially as regards the early life of the Messiah, to be embodied in their respective memoirs. Before they commence, they, as well as Marcus, will likely wish to see first the records which are now being made here for the Nazarites, and which will be an important guide to them. Marcus, however, has heard from Simon Peter a great deal of his Master's life, and Matthew has a personal knowledge of his Master's career.

"'I told my friends that I would do my best, but that I for one did not believe that anything trustworthy could now be collected on these subjects, and that indeed very little was known anywhere or treasured up regarding those years so long ago. Whereas I pointed out to them, that if they took my advice and wrote the life of the Master upon the Messianic prophecies drawn from all

sources available, they would be on safe ground upon which to base their teaching, and which nobody could contradict. With such material to work upon, they could easily expand each event and present it in an attractive literary form, whether they wrote it in Greek, Latin, or Aramaic—with the assistance of literary friends, who were able, artistically and concisely, to put various tablets together. These Scribes could afterwards be employed to write out, as required, extra copies on papyrus or parchment for the many clusters of disciples scattered all over the Diaspora, who would be anxious to have reliable records for the catechism of their respective disciples and converts, and certified by some of the Lord's apostles.'

"When Apollos stopped, I reminded him he had stated that he was able to prove from scriptures that his outline of the Messiah's early life was correct. I would therefore take him at his word, and ask him whence he drew the pre-existence of the Messiah. Without hesitation he at once quoted a passage in the

Proverbs, which the Rabbis taught as referring to the coming Messiah :—

"'Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way.—
Before his works of old
I was anointed from everlasting
From the beginning or even the earth was.
When he appointed the foundations of the earth,
Then I was by Him as one brought up by Him
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him.
Read also Psalm cx.'

"'Well,' I said, 'where do you find the Messiah prophesied as being the Son of God?' and Apollos replied: 'Look up the second Psalm, where you find it written :—

'I will declare the decree.
The Lord hath said to me
Thou art my Son.
This day I have begotten thee,
Ask of me, and I shall give thee
The heathen for thine inheritance.'

"Again I asked, 'Where is the cult of the Virgin introduced?'

"Apollos replied: 'See Isaiah:—

'Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign,
Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son
And shall call his name Immanuel.'

'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.'

"Apollos continued: 'This is only one passage clearly prophesying the miraculous incarnation of our Messiah, but in other sacred books belonging to other nations of antiquity they have practically the same message—though much more fully, in Egypt, in Greece, in India, &c.'

"Again I said: 'You mentioned that the birth of the Messiah was to be announced by angels; but where do you find this prophecy?' Apollos replied: 'The Rabbis find the prophecy of this in the book of Judges, where you read, "And the angel of the Lord

appeared unto the woman and said unto her: Behold now thou art barren and bearest not, but thou shall conceive and bear a son."'

"Apollos continued: 'This prophecy is also found in the Buddhist and Krishna scriptures, as well as in others; so that it must be perfectly correct, and must not be left out in the memoirs to be written.'

'The other signs which follow are chiefly drawn from Mithraism and Buddhist scriptures, also from the Eleusinian mystery plays which I have witnessed. I was formerly a member of this celebrated Greek cult, not only as a Mystæ; but having had conferred upon me the title of Epoptæ, I had, by right, admission to the "greater mysteries." In these sacred plays, exactly as in the memoirs of the saintly Buddha, there were presented a virgin espoused to a man; but Jupiter chose her for her beauty and virtue, and overshadowed her. The child was born when the mother was on a journey. Songs of angels were heard upon earth at the birth of the divine child, and he

was recognised as being divine by many infallible signs. The same applies to the appearance of the Star of the East which shone at his birth, and the visit of Magi who presented costly gifts; moreover, the divine child was worshipped by aged saints. These signs you read in the Indian scriptures, as in the sacred dramas of the Greeks. You find even some of these in the Jewish scriptures; thus the Rabbis will tell you that the passage in Numbers, "There shall come a star out of Jacob," refers to the Messiah; likewise the passage in Isaiah where it is foretold:—

"The Gentiles shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.
All they from Sheba shall come,
They shall bring gold and incense,
And they shall show forth the praises of the Lord."

As for the birth of the Messiah at Bethlehem, this is foretold in Micah, and is accepted by all Rabbis; so this must be correct,

whether now, fifty years after, we can get it confirmed from local history or not.'

"'Well,' I replied, 'so far you have proved the correctness of your conclusions. But what about the Messiah's flight into Egypt and his return? Where is this prophesied in the sacred volume?'

"Apollos replied: 'This event is prophesied in Hosea:—

> "When Israel was a child,
> Then I loved him
> And called my son out of Egypt;"

but besides a specific text, you may know that our most learned Rabbis teach that the flight of the child Messiah into Egypt and his return *must* take place—because typified in the migration of Israel, the type of the Messiah from Canaan to Egypt, and their return.

"'Again, Pharaoh persecuted Israel, the type of the Messiah—who, as you saw, is called in Hosea "The Son of God." Hence another Pharaoh (Herod) must persecute to death the real Messiah, as is seen in Exodus; where the

Lord said unto Moses: "Go return, for all the men are dead which sought thy life."

"'Yet, again, Pharaoh raged against the new-born son of the Israelites, hence Herod must do the same when the Messiah is born.

"'The massacre of the innocents at Bethlehem must take place, because it is prophesied in Jeremiah. Thus saith the Lord:—

"A voice was heard in Ramah.
Lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refused to be comforted for her children,
Because they were not."'

"I said at last: 'Well, I have only two more questions to put. First, you say it is prophesied that the Messiah should live in Galilee. Everybody knows that this is quite true, but is it also prophesied beforehand?'

"'Certainly,' said Apollos; 'read Isaiah, where he refers to Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, now Galilee, as the abode of the Messiah. You know that the appearance of

the Messiah is expected to be attended by signs, wonders, and miracles, as described in Isaiah xxxv. 5, xlii. 7; thus the ideal Messiah has been fully sketched even before his appearance, and with a constantly increasing minuteness of details, as also about the forerunner who should precede his advent.

"'You will therefore see,' he continued, 'that in compiling materials for the life and history of the Messiah, we pay little attention to traditions or written sources, both of which are so unreliable, and generally exaggerated and misleading; but we draw our material either from types, analogies, or from the sure word of prophecies which relate to the Messiah's mission—and found alike in the various Jewish and Pagan sacred books, those which we believe are types or prophecies of our Messiah.'

"Before parting, I said to Apollos: 'There is one thing more I wish you would clear up for me. Tell me, how do you expect to convert the adherents of the Romish Pantheon? The Pagan Church of the Roman Empire

is founded upon a sacrificial system, just like the Jews'. I understand the underlying idea is that the animal offerings are partly a thank-offering to Heaven, and partly an offering for the sins of men. Now, in these circumstances, what can you substitute for such an ancient, sacrificial worship, based upon the shedding of blood for the forgiveness or remission of sins?'

"Apollos replied: 'The view I have taken is partially drawn from the Essenes' teaching, also that of the Zoroastrian and Hindu worshippers, all of whom have abolished this gross, repulsive, and outward worship for the spiritual sacrifice, which latter is the only true one. Still, I feel the force of your remarks, and I have had to make up my quarrel with Paul, by confessing that probably his theory is the most workable one; and perhaps, in one aspect, the true one after all, as it is certainly the one most likely to gain the acceptance of those nations which still cling to animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins and as a thanks-offering to Heaven. At least

this theory may hold sway until these nations have been advanced to the higher view—which others, with myself, are holding as the proper explanation. You know Paul aims at the same thing as I do, but the transition with him is much more easy, especially for the Gentiles. He insists upon it as a divine revelation, namely, the necessity of bloody sacrifices to obtain forgiveness from Heaven; but he says also that the Messiah whom he preaches has been made the scapegoat and the bloody sacrifice for the sins of the whole world by his crucifixion—so that all other sacrifices, animals included, are now abolished for evermore. The virtue of this sacrifice of the Messiah comes about by his being the Son of God, and therefore his death has a divine virtue. In other words, seeing that God as a righteous judge must punish sinners with everlasting damnation, His wrath has fallen upon the Son of His love, who is looked upon as a substitute, as if it were a transaction in a Court of Law. In this way animal sacrifices are abolished, God's

righteousness vindicated, and sinners justified, for the sake of the Messiah. The result is an eternal reconciliation with God, with love and gratitude to the Messiah, whom henceforth they serve as becometh saints, out of love and gratitude. In this way a new heaven and earth will be created, and Messiah will triumph over all his enemies.'

"Now, dear brethren, I shall not tax your patience any longer. You will see from this that Apollos' idea is to draw the early life of the Messiah from prophetic forecasts and events, found in other religious systems; although the most important part is found in the Jewish scriptures. And this because the Essenes' Messiah is to him, and should be to all nations, the fulfilment of all the world's aspirations. Hence the chief elements and rituals in their systems, which have happened to other Redeemers, must therefore also be incorporated in the life of the Essene Messiah, in order to justify his claim of being the world's spiritual King and Redeemer.

"Let me close with these words of Apollos:—

"'First, be thoroughly convinced in your own mind that Jesus was the true and spiritual Messiah, and then you can safely and truly reconstruct his whole history, his birth, his childhood, his work as a Messiah, his death, his reported resurrection and ascension, and draw it all from prophecies which must be received as infallible truth, and which therefore must have been fulfilled in him, either actually, or allegorically, or spiritually—just exactly as you Essenes expound the Jewish Scriptures, and in this way are able to reach the true meaning of every passage and every prophecy uttered by holy inspired men and recorded in our sacred Scriptures.'"

The Superior expressed his warm thanks to Reuben for his interesting address, adding:—"I think, however, that Apollos' ingenious way has nothing to recommend it to our sect, the Essenes, because on these lines the life of the Messiah becomes to me practically a romance, by not being built upon

actual facts, known and proven. All the same, I quite understand that Apollos, with Paul and others, claim prophetical forecasts as divine testimonies; therefore, to them superior and more reliable. Certainly they believe it in all good faith, and would likely die for their faith. As far as I am concerned, I think that this veneration paid to prophecies, or this basing the life of our Messiah upon what has been recorded regarding other Redeemers, is altogether erroneous. At the same time, I must admit that there are elements of truth in this conception which may help to make the new faith more acceptable to the Gentiles, and also to many of the Jews. It comes, therefore, as far as I can see, to be a matter of concession and compromise. I am of opinion, however, that we should leave out in our own collection of memoirs anything referring to the birth and early life of our Messiah. Let us rather commence at the time when he joined the Nazarene sect and was enrolled as a member by the usual form of Baptism. Here I think we shall tread

on more solid ground; hence, let Lucas, Matthew, or others, incorporate, if they like, these prophetical forecasts as if they were actual history in their records of the birth and early life of the Messiah. We had better leave them out, as said, and begin at a later period. You are therefore quite at liberty, dear brother Levi, to dispose of these rolls to others."

## DISCOURSES AND PARABLES

The next day, when all the brethren met, Levi, after prayer, commenced his address by saying:—"Beloved brethren, as you are aware, the subject allotted to me is to give you some information regarding the teaching and discourses of the Messiah.

"I shall be as concise as possible, as it is a large subject. I have been told that some collectors are in possession of more than thirty Mimshall (Parables); but whether they are all authentic, I do not know. Up to the present I have only secured nineteen, of which I have brought copies with me. There are also said to be a good many short and pregnant sayings, or germs of parables, in circulation, mostly oral; of which I may get particulars later, on my next visit to Galilee and Perea, which I shall send to our revered Superior.

"What is called by some people the 'Sermon on the Mount' contains a description of nine fundamental traits of character, which the Messiah announces must distinguish his true disciples, and by which only they will reach the true happiness for which the world is longing. These Beatitudes are accompanied by some nineteen short rules, by which his followers had to regulate their lives as members of the 'Spiritual Kingdom of God,' and which the Messiah came to establish upon earth.

"These sayings and discourses, I learned, were delivered by him at various times and in various places; and hence they have been well remembered by his numerous hearers. Still, I believe there are different versions of these in circulation.

"I may say that I have requested our revered Superior to give us at the close of my address, or to-morrow, a short analysis of the contents of the Beatitudes and the lessons which may be drawn from them. I think you will find that they are, in fact, the essence

of the Essenes' ethical teaching, which was imparted to Jesus when he was a member of your society for so many years. It is upon this foundation evidently that they are all framed, and were duly delivered in his own matchless style. I am sure we shall all be anxious to have our beloved Superior's words of wisdom upon this interesting theme, when we meet again to-morrow.

"I have assorted these Mimshalls under three headings, as being the most convenient way of classifying them.

"1*st*. *Parables of Instructions*. — Now at Capernaum I secured, for a small remuneration, three of these, written on scraps of papyrus in Aramaic, and in the possession of a poor Scribe who in years gone by had jotted them down from the lips of one of the hearers who actually heard them from the Master's lips when teaching at the lake. No doubt others had got copies of them as well as myself, either from the same or other parties. The first one we may call 'The Sower,' in which the Messiah, in his symbolic language,

represents himself as the spiritual husbandman who is planting heavenly truths in the soul of humanity, but of which only a small percentage bears abundant fruit. Indeed, the Messiah afterwards himself gave this explanation to his disciples.

"In the two other parables, the Messiah tells his hearers the reason of this, viz. that in the soul of every man there are two tendencies at work—the one drawing upwards towards truth, goodness, and holiness; the other dragging downwards towards evil, degradation, and sin. This is graphically illustrated by the two parables of the tares and the draw-net.

"When I visited Capernaum, I secured also four other short parables, and I was assured by the old fisherman that they were actually the very words of the Master himself which had been orally preserved and transmitted in the family. I took them down word for word from the lips of the patriarch, and believe they are undoubtedly genuine; for the same spirit breathes through them as is found in the other four. In fact, the one set com-

pletes the other set which I had previously acquired.

"These four short stories we may designate 'The Mustard Seed,' 'The Leaven,' 'The Hidden Treasure,' and 'The Precious Pearl.' The previous parables show the severe struggle between good and evil in the soul of man, but in the later four we find a more triumphant note is struck, for here the Messiah shows that the good will eventually triumph over the evil. The seed of heavenly truth, although apparently so greatly despised and neglected, will yet grow up, in spite of the noxious weeds around it; and, amidst all opposition, will gain the full development in beauty and perfection, in stem, branches, and fruit, in the soul of humanity.

"Again, the leaven is small in bulk, and therefore its true worth is easily overlooked, but behold, by-and-by it will ferment the whole lump among which it is placed. Or, in other words, the heavenly truths taught by the Messiah will yet leaven the whole mass of humanity, if sufficient time is given it to

overcome all obstacles and opposition. And the same truth holds good in the two other parables. The heavenly truths are like a lost treasure or a precious pearl. They may be long lost to sight, and other showy things of this world preferred; but once let their intrinsic values be seen and realised, and the soul instinctively, and full of enthusiasm, leaves everything else in order to secure these imperishable, heavenly treasures of untold preciousness. Thus these four parables are charming and consoling, for they show that the victory will rest with the spiritual reign of Messiah's kingdom upon earth. The lower will give way to the higher; sin to holiness; hatred to love; earth's battle-ground for heaven's home of peace, joy, and love.

"I shall now turn to the *Parables of Grace*, of which I have secured eight specimens, all beautiful. Most of these I got at Perea; some at Cana, the rest at Bethany. I believe all these are absolutely authentic, and this is confirmed by the Christ-like spirit which they all breathe. They may well be called

Parables of Grace, for in these we see reflected God's gracious spirit of sympathy, kindness, mercy, and love; which is the spirit in which Jesus lived, and by which, more than anything else, he revealed God's feelings towards poor struggling humanity. You must read these eight Mimshalls for yourselves. I shall merely give a short outline for your guidance.

"The first we may call the Two Debtors, but you must read it in connection with the episode of which it forms a part and of which I also procured a copy. It is the story of a poor outcast woman, of her repentance, of her gratitude, of her love, and of her forgiveness. Listen to Heaven's tender voice of mercy through our Messiah: 'Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much.'

"Next I have got three beautiful parables, once more revealing God's wonderful, loving, and tender heart. We may call them:—

"'God's interest in the lost;'
'God's search for the lost;'
'God's recovery of the lost;'
'God's restoration of the lost.'

These three parables we may term, respectively, 'The Lost Sheep,' 'The Lost Drachm,' and 'The Lost Son.' By all means you must read and ponder these three revelations of God's beautiful character, as reflected in these charming stories.

"In various other places on my visits, I secured four other parables, partly oral, but they are worth preserving. I shall merely give you their names, and the lessons they convey:

1*st.* The lowest seats at feasts, or true humility.

2*nd.* The Pharisee and the Publican, or true self-abasement.

3*rd.* The Great Supper, or the true spirit of hospitality.

4*th.* The Good Samaritan, or the true neighbour.

"I shall not weary you, and therefore give you very shortly the names of the other parables I secured—bearing more especially upon *Judgments or warnings*:—

1*st.* The barren fig-tree.

2*nd.* The two sons and the wicked husbandman.

*3rd.* The marriage of the King's Son.

*4th.* The unfaithful servant.

*5th.* The ten virgins.

*6th.* The rich fool.

*7th.* The builder upon sand.

*8th.* Dives and Lazarus.

"The spiritual lessons of all these you can easily gather for yourselves.

"Whether these latter were all really true or garbled records of the Messiah's teaching, I am unable to say. Some of them seem to breathe a spirit unlike the one we associate with the spirit of the Master; hence, probably in some cases his sayings have been partly misunderstood or exaggerated by the hearers. In any case, I would recommend our revered Superior to use caution and discrimination in giving all these a place in the memoirs of the Master. This applies, however, more especially to some prophetic utterances, which are of an apocalyptic character. These are also announced as having been uttered by the Master; but some of them breathe a spirit of hatred, defiance, and rebellion against the

imperial forces of Rome, more in conformity with the spirit of the Zealots, who feast and feed upon such lurid pictures of a coming destruction upon the enemies of the people of God. I have secured, however, two specimens of these writings, and have them with me, if they are wanted."

Reuben now rose, and remarked that if any of the rolls referred to were not to be used as intended, he should like to have them—in order to make copies, not only for himself, but also that he might offer four of the longest Peræan parables to Lucas.[1] He also desired to offer some of the other rolls to the well-known apostle of the Lord called Matthew, whom he believed was also now considering in his retirement from active work, and in his old age, the collecting of materials for the purpose by-and-by, with the help of capable assistants, of giving some reminiscences of his Master's life and doctrines for the benefit of the Churches

[1] Say the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Judge, and the Pharisee and the Publican.

at home and abroad. He would likely wait now, however, until he had a copy of the memoirs which the Superior intended to issue for the use of the Ebionites and others. It would doubtless help Matthew greatly to have this memoir, in order to check the contributions he had already received from others; and of course he would be able to give much reliable information from his own personal knowledge, being one of the Lord's apostles who had known him in the flesh.

Levi closed the conversation by saying:—

"These nineteen parables, with the nineteen short rules of life, which form a compact whole, I have written out full, in Aramaic, along with the nine Beatitudes—knowing that neither the Nazarenes nor the Ebionites are capable of reading or writing Greek or Latin. Indeed, very few of them have learned to read or write even Aramaic, and require therefore some converted Scribe to read aloud—in order to instruct them and the congregation—from these rolls in their own meeting-houses. It should be sufficient, therefore, if only a dozen or two

manuscripts of these memoirs were taken in hand and copied out, and only a wise selection made, so as not to make the rolls too bulky. These copies could be distributed among the leading small congregations scattered over the Holy Land, and a few extra copies might be sent to our Lord's Apostles still living or to special friends in the Diaspora."

With these words, Levi handed the various rolls to the revered Superior, who received them with great satisfaction and warmly pressed his hands for the welcome and important gift.

The Superior turned now to the audience, and addressed them as follows:—

"Our dear brother Levi has asked me to make a few remarks before we close the meeting. I am sure we are all greatly indebted to him for his most interesting lecture and for the great diligence he has shown in his researches, by which he has succeeded in collecting so many precious rolls, with so much information bearing upon the teaching of the Messiah. We saw that these embraced Discourses as well as Parables; but besides these, there are, of

course, many interesting incidents in connection with the Messiah's life and mission, about which various detailed records have reached me from outside quarters, all interesting, no doubt, though not essentially all authentic.

"I shall certainly follow Levi's advice and make a careful selection of these, for the principle I intend to work upon is only to admit what reflects the loving, gentle, compassionate, and tender spirit of the Master. This to me will be the touchstone by which I will judge of all records submitted to me.

"Now, I am anxious to impress this upon all here present, because in the records submitted to me I find in one part the portraiture of one who reflects in beautiful lineaments and in fullest measure God's own lovable spirit of mercy, forbearance, with every other imaginable and engaging perfection, so as to woo and win the human soul to Himself in gratitude, love, and admiration. There is, however, another aspect presented in too many of these records, which is the very reverse,

and therefore which disfigures and discredits the attractive picture.

"Let me explain myself a little more in detail. My plan, as said, will therefore be to reject the latter wherever I meet them; for evidently they are caricatures, repellent presentations, of the Master — ascribing attributes, motives, speech, and actions to him, which it is impossible to accept as true, especially to me who knew him so intimately and had learned to love and admire his loving, peaceful, sympathetic nature, always humble and charitable. He had ever suffered indignities and ingratitude patiently, but did not retaliate. He had, in fact, lived up to the strict rules of life which he advocated, reflected in his Sermon on the Mount and in other of his beautiful addresses, which may be accepted as representing him honestly and truthfully. These hard sayings, to which I object so strongly, represent the fierce and intolerant spirit of fanatical and converted Jews, who misrepresented or misunderstood the Master, and altered traditional sayings to

suit their preconceived notions of what the coming Messiah would do and say when here upon earth—especially after his second coming, when, as the Judge of mankind, he would consign to eternal torments all who had despised and rejected him at his first advent. The same harsh, revengeful, and overbearing spirit crops up in other places where records are found, probably composed long after the Messiah's death.

"Thus you will find parables where the Master is reported as having cursed a fig-tree and drowned a flock of Gardarene swine. You read of the harsh words to the Syro-Phœnician woman, and also find the harsh conduct reported towards his mother. Again, you read how he frequently threatened offenders with everlasting fire; also, in the parable of the Marriage Feast, the uninvited guest is cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Read also the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, where the terrific picture is drawn of Dives in Gehenna, where he cannot be

respited or forgiven, even though his repentance is such that he is anxious to go and save his brethren upon earth from such a fate. Likewise in the parables of the Talents and the Foolish Virgins—both have a harsh ending; also the parable of the Sheep and Goats, which ends with the words: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his agents. Your doom is everlasting punishment.'

"All these, and more, might be added, to convince you that those who penned these and other sayings as coming from the Messiah have disfigured the beautiful lineaments and spotless, lovable character which I know that he possessed in richest measure, and whereby he reflected, better than any one I ever knew, God Himself in His moral and spiritual affections of love, truth, purity, and holiness.

"Once more: it seems to me that most of the representations of the Master's intercourse with the Pharisees is overstated and erroneous. Remember they were, and still are, the trusted friends of the bulk of the

nations, and the most pious and strictest sect of the Jews. They champion the cause of popular religion against the aristocratic section of the priesthood.

"Contrary to the Master's loving and gentle spirit, studious to avoid giving offence or passing severe judgment, you find ascribed to him an habitual attitude towards them of bitterness, defiance, and hatred. You hear him using against them harsh, uncharitable, and offensive epithets, calling them hypocrites, a generation of vipers, children of the devil; in short, assailing, provoking, and castigating them most unmercifully with his sarcasm and abusive language. Now, all this proves to me that this is also a caricature and a misrepresentation of the Master; hence, in the memoirs I shall leave them out entirely. Knowing the Messiah so well as I do, I would not hold him responsible for these extreme and terrific doctrines and offensive language. These hasty, rude words and offensive sentiments are such that we are not permitted, in fairness to the memory of the dear departed,

to accept them as true or to insert them in his memoirs. We must not blindly accept anything or everything which is put before us, but we must remember the proverb which says, 'Prove the spirits, whether they be of God or not'; and, as the Master said himself to his too zealous and revengeful disciples, when they wished to call fire down from heaven to destroy the despisers of their Master's doctrine, 'Ye know not of what Spirit ye are.'

"Should the other collectors, like Luke, Matthew, or Marcus, thoughtlessly incorporate such and similar legends, traditions, or misrepresentations in the memoirs they are preparing, it would be deplorable; for an altogether wrong and misleading idea will be given to the world of the Master's true life and beautiful teaching. Hence, I agree very much with what I hear Paul has said in this connection—'Henceforth I will not know Christ after the flesh,' evidently meaning that all these unworthy stories in circulation of the Master's life, conversation, and teaching

were so unreliable, and many of them so revolting, that he would only preach Christ as our highest spiritual ideal, the image and incarnation of a God of Love, leaving out the details in his life upon earth; hence we must not believe any words or actions as having emanated from the Messiah which are not in keeping with this lofty and perfect ideal. It is quite true, therefore, that Christ is better presented to the Church in his ideal and truest aspect, namely, as a representative of humanity and as the latest and most perfect realisation upon earth of the Divine. This is also necessary, because men in all ages have craved for an incarnation of the Highest and a relationship of affection and close union through a human manifestation. This will be seen, therefore, in the Christ in which Paul believes, and which he is preaching; hence I quite agree with him, and wish him God-speed in his efforts to lift the Messiah conception to the highest level possible, and to ignore all reports which do not conform to it in the presentation of the historical Christ.

"In reply to my strictures, some of you may think that, after all, these misrepresentations of the Messiah's teaching are of little consequence; for if tares have been sown in the field, the wheat is so much more abundant. But this is a wrong way of looking at it. On the contrary, we may expect that the specimen given in the coming memoirs, and indeed already preached everywhere, attributing a harsh and vindictive character to the Saviour, and also presenting him as an implacable Judge on the great day of judgment: all these are sure to tend to weaken his influence for good among his disciples and the world at large. Knowing what human nature is, so prone to go astray and follow what is evil: you may expect that his disciples will be more ready to imitate him in the reported defects in his character than in his sublimer aspects; hence, serious harm to the progress of his cause may be done for many ages to come.

"The question therefore arises—if the world is converted to our Christ, will he be to the converts the 'Prince of Peace' whom I be-

lieve he aspired to be? I fear, however, that this conception will not gain uniform acceptance, owing to the unfortunate double aspect of his character presented to the world in these false reports scattered abroad. Therefore, the world may rather judge and accept of the Messiah as a 'Prince of War,' imitate him as such, breathe what they consider his spirit of war and conquest, and fight with carnal weapons for his cause. In other words, he may become his followers' chosen celestial leader and commander, under whose banners armies will draw their swords and kill each other in order to establish his kingdom upon earth by force, fraud, and bloodshed; just as the Roman Empire has done to this day. Whereas, on the contrary, 'our' Messiah's object was to succeed solely by love, by moral persuasion, and by unselfish sacrifices for others. These latter were the spiritual weapons by which alone he wished to win over the world to the worship of his Heavenly Father of peace, love, and holiness.

"Some of you may still hesitate, however,

to proclaim 'our' Messiah as the Prince of War; but if it is done and acted upon, there would be weighty reasons to justify the world in doing so.

"To convince you of this more easily, let me tell you that I have lately received papyrus rolls from more than one quarter, in which are given records of an extraordinary speech reported to have been delivered by our Messiah during one of his missionary tours, and in which he is said to have given utterance to the following startling statement:—

"'Think not that I have come to send peace on the earth. I have come, not to send peace, but a sword.'

"Now if this is a true saying, you will not wonder if by-and-by, as his followers gain importance and power, they will think themselves justified in claiming the Messiah as a Prince of War, *i.e.* a God of battle, just as Jehovah was depicted in times of old. This conception is, however, a familiar one to the Zealots and Sicarees, who swarm in Judæa and Galilee; for the Messiah they are expecting,

and for whose speedy advent fervent prayers are daily being offered, is just such a ruler, a Prince of War. Hence when 'their' Messiah appears, he is prophesied as breaking in pieces the yoke of the Romans and as bringing a sword everywhere over the land—and into every household where traitors of the patriotic Jews are to be found.

"To me these words seem to have been uttered—not by 'our' Messiah, Jesus; but that they are the reported threats of 'their' Messiah, say Elias, the mighty warrior prophet, who is daily expected; hence, a mistake has evidently been made, by putting the above wild threats in the records into the mouth of the wrong Messiah.

"This explanation is confirmed by what follows, for listen to the Messiah's reported further announcement:—

"'I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.'

"Now try to realise what this threat really means. Nothing more nor less to plain folks than that the mission of the Messiah will end in dissolving or breaking up, on his second advent to earth, the holiest and tenderest ties of all human relationships, encouraging the blood-feuds between kinsfolk, which, alas! are too common already.

"As stated, however, I have no hesitation in stating emphatically that such barbarous words and sentiments are a flagrant calumny on the fair fame, and the humane, tender, and peaceful character of our late beloved Messiah, Jesus.

"Whatever others may do, I for one utterly reject them and will accept no figurative or symbolical explanations. As soon as I begin in earnest to assort these many discourses or parables and incidents of our Messiah's life, I shall certainly destroy the above objectionable statements, so that not by any chance may they be included in the memoirs we are preparing. I am only afraid, however, that others, who are also beginning to make collec-

tions, will not be so careful in this respect; and if not, the new faith will suffer serious harm. Because future ages will be sure to consider themselves justified in settling their differences with others by the sword, also by sanctioning bloody persecutions and approving that family quarrels leading to vendettas or blood-feuds between kinsfolk should be settled by the sword. All will draw their sanction for these barbarous customs by trusting to what has been reported as being the Messiah's own sayings, and which will therefore be to them a final appeal.

"Thus you see that, by making a false start in the collection of these records of the Messiah's life and teaching, incalculable harm may be done to his cause in the world—and this, perhaps, for ages to come.

"Now I shall say no more, having kept you rather longer than I intended. To-morrow we shall study together the so-called 'Sermon on the Mount,' which reveals the Messiah in his true character, exhibiting, as it does, the high

principles of love, service, unselfish sacrifice and devotion, which animated him throughout his whole career.

"Before we separate, however, I think it my duty to make one remark, in the way of a short preliminary explanation regarding to-morrow's lecture.

"You are all well aware that strings of brief ethical maxims for didactic purposes is a favourite method used by our most celebrated Rabbis, the scholars having to learn these by heart as a guide to their conduct through life.

"As a rule, these maxims are drawn—partly from our sacred scriptures, such as the Proverbs, the Ecclesiastes, &c., but very often also from the well-known and voluminous Wisdom literature, with which most of you are acquainted, and indeed concerning which Jesus himself was a diligent student in his day.

"Now, so far as I can see, the originality which Jesus has shown in selecting the maxims which make up his well-known and admired addresses consists in this—that each and all

of them have a certain relation, as links in a chain, to one supreme object in which they find their true fulfilment and explanation. This supreme object, which is of paramount importance to every soul of man, is the 'search for happiness or blessedness'; and here is the crux, for Jesus in his address shows how to reach it in this life and in the life to come.

"Each of the maxims selected by Jesus, however, seeks to answer at least one part of this ineradicable quest of the human heart. It is from this point of view, therefore, that I intend to-morrow to treat of the so-called 'Sermon on the Mount,' and to this lecture I cordially invite each and all of my dear children to be present."

## THE BEATITUDES

On the following afternoon, the brethren flocked to the lecture-room to hear the promised address, which they knew would probably be a long one; and therefore to them all the more delightful, as the Superior was the speaker, and he being so greatly beloved and admired by all. After the aged Superior had offered up a prayer, he took his seat at the reading-desk and asked Levi to read from his papyrus rolls the Beatitudes, which he did in the following words:—

"Jesus taught his disciples on various occasions what true happiness consisted in, saying:—

Blessed are the poor in spirit;
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are the mourners;
For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek;
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for uprightness;
For they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful;
For they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart;
For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers;
For they shall be called the sons of God.

Blessed are they who have been persecuted
For righteousness' sake;
For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are you, when men shall denounce you
And persecute you,
Saying all manner of evil against you
Falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad,
For great is your reward in heaven.

For so persecuted they the prophets
Who were before you.

The Superior commenced by saying: "Dear brethren, we may take the Beatitudes as standing for a short manifesto, by which Jesus, claiming to be the world's spiritual Ruler, introduced the laws of the Kingdom of Heaven to the large audiences by whom he was surrounded on various occasions. The 'blessedness' which is the result of living the Christ-life is, in other words, the supreme degree of happiness to which the soul will be raised; hence, it is the constantly recurring keynote of the Beatitudes.

"The fundamental principle is based upon the fact that Jesus sought as his chief mission to establish upon earth the 'Empire of Love and Service,' in order that the world might reach true and lasting happiness. This is in opposition to what rules the world; namely,

the Empire of selfishness, deceit, and violence, and by the fatal influence of which the world is gradually drifting to ruin. From this point of view the spiritual graces which Jesus advocated in his manifesto are easily seen to be the only ones by which true blessedness or happiness can be reached, and this, you know, has ever been the quest of all upon earth.

"These graces are therefore pre-eminently required by all his followers, as citizens of the beautiful Empire of Love upon earth, where the measure of love to man is to be nothing less than a man's love of himself.

"In examining the Beatitudes, outsiders may wonder why the grace of 'humility,' which is called 'poverty of spirit,' should be put in the forefront, but there are various weighty reasons for this. As you study the Scriptures, you will find that there is hardly another grace which sums up so many other excellencies of a lovable, a noble, and a self-sacrificing character. Thus the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the prophetical writings, all unite in praising humility as one of the

cardinal virtues. Those of you who remember Jesus will recollect that, if there was anything in his own spiritual attainments which he recommended his disciples and others to imitate, it was this lowly grace: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.'

"Some people seem to acquire this grace of humility more easily than others. I know that Jesus only gained this grace after much struggle: for his noble and aspiring soul; his sensitive, highly-strung, nervous system; his heart overflowing with love, always longing for sympathy and reciprocated affection—all these would often, and especially in the early days of his noble mission, threaten to rise in rebellion against the overbearing pride, the haughty demeanour, the irritating disdain of people he met in the pursuit of his self-sacrificing mission to bless others. These were puffed up by their imagined importance and overweening conceit, and in their foolish pride they treated him with indifference and coldness, often even with contempt and disdain—he being

to them only a poorly-clad, peripatetic healer, a reputed wonder-worker, and a sacred story-teller or reciter to the common country folks. Of these, there were many wandering about in order to make a living, most of them being looked down upon by the better educated classes as charlatans, as indeed they still are in Palestine to this day.

"We see, however, that our beloved Jesus, during his long training, had learned to master himself in all such trying circumstances, and that he became also perfect in this particularly God-pleasing and beautiful grace.

"Let us all therefore strive to gain this virtue which heaven prizes so much; and, to help us in such seeking, let us dwell for a little upon this, the first of the nine Beatitudes.

"Now, the opposite of a humble man is the proud person. The difference between the two lies chiefly in this: that the one realises his true relationship to God, to man, to Nature, and to himself; whereas the other

neglects doing so, and suffers for it. A proud man does not feel his true dependence upon God, as does the humble, and therefore he considers himself sufficient unto himself. Neither does he realise that true dependence upon others which should exist between high and low, but he treats them as a rule with haughtiness and in an overbearing spirit. The true reason is, that to a proud and grasping person everything is centered in himself. The God he really serves is himself; hence to gain his own advancement or gratifications he is often tempted and yields, in trampling upon others' rights and feelings. In fact, he uses others as stepping-stones for his own benefit.

"Such a person does his best to prevent the unity and harmony, the friendly co-operation, the cultivation of a loving spirit and consideration for others, which are their due, and upon which Society is based. Pride, with worldly ambition is, in many cases, a vice, dreadfully mischievous in its baneful effects. It is the root of most personal,

family, social, and national differences, quarrels, strifes, unhappiness; and frequently also of bloodshed. In the Scriptures, you read how people are warned against this vice.

"Look now at the humble person. He realises, as already stated, his true relationship to God as one of dependence, of companionship, and he regards himself as being chosen as God's medium, or channel on earth, for bringing help, comfort and blessing to others. This threefold relationship gradually affects his whole life and character, and transforms him more and more into a child of God and into His likeness of spiritual beauty and usefulness. For your instruction let us go over this a little more in detail.

## DEPENDENCE

"First, as dependent upon God, the humble person realises that all he has or ever will have are loans from God, to whom he is accountable, and for the use of which God deserves his gratitude and service as the only

thank-offering he can bring to Him. He feels also his own insignificance in view of the infinite greatness and excellence of God, and this naturally produces humility in the soul towards his Maker. Besides, the humble man is conscious of his weakness, his infirmities, and his shortcomings. You will therefore find that the highest piety is ever associated with the deepest humility, which qualifies for the reception of other beautiful graces following in its train.

## COMPANIONSHIP

"There is, secondly, companionship with God. The proud in his conceit forgets or neglects God, feeling that he can get on quite well by his own efforts. What he has of gifts, graces, or favourable opportunities in life, he considers to be his own, which he can do with as he thinks proper without reference or feelings of accountability or gratitude to God at all. On the other hand, the humble person realises every moment in

life his need to lean upon God, if he is to be guided aright; and hence he naturally becomes a man of prayer and praise, who brings everything, whether joys or sorrows, to God, and consults Him in his every step. This lofty companionship becomes the soul's supreme joy and honour. Naturally, by dwelling much with God in thought, meditation, and communion; by seeking God's will and approval in all difficulties; he gradually assimilates much of the beauty of God's own nature, such as may be seen in His truthfulness, His mercy, His righteousness, His love and pity, and upon which human society is founded and can alone prosper.

### MINISTRATION

"Thirdly, the humble person realises also that, as God's channel or medium, it is his duty so to live and reflect God's loving-kindness and benevolence, that he may be a blessing to the society in which God has placed him. 'To do good and to be good,' this is his

watchword through life. This becomes his delight, as well as his highest aspiration.

"Now you can understand why the humble person finds favour with God. You can also understand why he becomes a favourite with men. Far from treating others with pride or tyranny, the opposite is the case. The humble, therefore, makes sweet the place of his abode wherever he dwells, by the perfume of loving deeds. He walks through life with gentle steps; is modest and helpful to others. He cultivates a peaceful, conciliating spirit, and considers others' rights as well as his own. Indeed, how many sore heartaches are they spared, who are of a humble spirit.

"Therefore, while the proud are disliked and raise up enemies against themselves, the humble make friends, who always do their best to aid them forward on life's journey. As the proud despised others in the day of their prosperity, so they find no helper in the day of their own adversity.

## THE INWARD STRUGGLE

"Once more, the humble realises, in regard to himself, his own defects and imperfections, and strives to overcome them. His life is thus one of struggle, but also one of progress. In this way he gradually improves himself, and thereby qualifies for higher promotions, solely by his own merits. He lives in the light of unseen and unrealised ideals, which he strives continually to attain.

"On the other hand, the proud, being conceited, overvalues himself; in other words, he forms an exaggerated estimate of himself. Pride is of all others the most insuperable barrier to real inward improvement; hence, those who are too proud to learn go easily astray, or take false steps—which bring them losses and often even ruin.

"See, therefore, the advantage of being humble, for humility leads to a life of prayer, to friendship *with* God and likeness *to* Him. It is the safeguard of all virtues; it promotes growth in grace. It makes men bring their

mind to their condition, when it is a low one, and try to make the best of it. It prevents them also from murmuring, complaining, or blaming their lot in life; for they see God's hand in their outward circumstances continually, and bow in submission to Him.

"The humble controls his desires and ambitions, thus avoiding being puffed up by pride. He does not seek either to look big, to speak big, or to act boastfully. The grace of humility makes men useful and thankful for small mercies, so that they do not hunt after honours or the highest seats at the feast of life. They are not conceited because of their own excellencies, knowing well how many people excel them and how high is the standard of perfection. Besides, they trace everything as love-tokens or mercies from God, and therefore they give Him all the glory; and are glad if His smile and approbation, reflected in an approving conscience, are their reward.

## THE INHERITORS OF THE EARTH

"Once more, the humble grows more self-denying and controls himself better, as he grows in this grace and becomes increasingly acquainted with his obligations to God. There is in him no room for either pride or self-sufficiency. At the same time, the humble knows how to respect himself as he respects others. While, therefore, pride courts its own downfall, humility becomes the inheritor of the earth. All this, and much more which might be urged, proves that humility is an excellent grace of the spirit. It is the evidence of being a child of God, and is accompanied with contentment, peace, and childlike submission to the will of God, who always knows best.

"We see, therefore, that Jesus was right in placing humility in the forefront of his manifesto; for in the new society which he was to form in the world, and which was based upon Love, the grace of humility must of necessity hold the foremost place. In the Empire of Love upon earth, pride will gain no entrance;

for it is the humble person, with his love and service to God and man, who is alone worthy to be its citizen; and until this is realised, the new faith has not fulfilled its mission as promulgated by its founder.

## MOURNERS

"Let us next look rapidly at the remaining graces which accompany 'humility,' and which make those who possess them to be worthy citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. Shortly stated, they all spring from humility. This is the parent stem, and the others are different expressions of this fundamental and spiritual principle of Love.

"Let us consider the next grace, the '*Mourners.*' By this is not meant those who mourn for their dead, but, as you may know, it is an abbreviated Jewish expression for the 'mourners of Zion,' the humble souls to whom God and His laws are precious, who therefore mourn or grieve in proportion as they see wickedness triumph in the world.

They are concerned for God's glory and man's happiness, and they mourn when they see evil triumphant. But wait! The Empire of Love shall yet be established on the earth, wickedness shall yet be overthrown, and the humble souls who mourn here shall be comforted hereafter and their hearts shall be filled with joy unspeakable.

### MEEKNESS

"I need not enlarge upon the other graces mentioned in the Beatitudes, because they are so nearly related to humility, that I would have to repeat myself to a great extent. Thus there is '*Meekness*,' which is the spirit in which humility is exercised.

"The other grace is '*Uprightness*,' which brings in its train right living, right conduct, right principles, right aims, right purposes, and right thinking.

"Next comes the grace of being '*Merciful*,' which is specially seen in the humble soul, who is thankful to God for all the undeserved mercies which He sends him daily—such as

'sparing mercy, supplying mercy, sustaining mercy, and by-and-by glorifying mercy.' These are also, therefore, merciful to others. They naturally eschew violence and cruelty. They are charitable and helpful to people who may little deserve it. They have compassion on others. They pity the ignorant, and instruct them. They warn the careless. Yea, even to his beast a humble man is merciful. The Scriptures are full of passages praising this beautiful grace of mercy. To the merciful, the new world about to descend upon earth would always give a warm welcome. To them, the doors of heaven are wide open. They were merciful here, often under great provocations; now, as a reward, they shall have a full meed of happiness and welcome in the Empire of Love, of which they shall be its valued and honoured citizens.

### A PURIFIED HEART

"The sixth grace describes the inward state of the heart of the humble. Their excellence

is not only outward in conduct, but is also inward in their motives.

"We are all, indeed, imperfect in this present world. Meantime, what will help us to progress towards this ideal purity of heart, or, as we should rather call it, 'a clear conscience,' will be the daily practice of trying to realise the divine presence of God. When this habit is formed, as we saw was the case with the humble souls, then we shall realise God's love more vividly; and our desire to reciprocate His dear love, which comes to be our supremest joy, will gradually cast out of the soul evil thoughts and evil desires, and we shall be better able to preserve a pure heart and a clear, sensitive conscience.

"While it is true that our life's highest good is to live in fellowship with God, yet this will not make us selfishly introspective or unconcerned about the welfare of others. On the contrary, it will awaken in us a supreme concern for all in need, and a zealous co-operation with all who are striving to uplift mankind. The soul's devotion to God will

also seek its earthly expression in love to humanity, which it will look upon as a loving brotherhood.

"The promise held out to the pure of heart, or those who try to cultivate a clear conscience, is that they shall 'see God.' This does not refer merely to the next life, for already upon earth they enjoy this privilege in various ways. Thus their eyes are opened, so that they see God in Nature around them, and this at every step. They see Him manifested in His wonderful wisdom, in His almighty power, in His entrancing beauty, and it fills their hearts with mute admiration and tunes their souls to silent worship.

"They also see God in His providence towards them for good, hedging them round and disposing of all the circumstances of their life according to the depth and riches of His exceeding wisdom, love, and mercy. This, more than anything else which life can offer, gives peace, confidence, and courage to the soul.

"Lastly, they live in daily sweet com-

munion with God, which is not only seeing God by faith, but, more delightful still, it is soul meeting soul. This gives them a sunny and radiant disposition. To Him the trembling heart may unburden all its sorrows and forebodings; and, as a loving mother knows how to soothe her darling's fears by her presence, so God's entrance into the soul gives strength, courage, hopefulness, and a holy confidence, which nothing can shake. It is the anchor of the soul, amidst all that is fleeting and uncertain. It is easily seen, therefore, that to 'see God' is a most powerful and practical way of gaining holiness in character, with peace and gladness in the soul.

"In the life to come we shall merely continue, therefore, the delightful occupation we already began and enjoyed here; but, doubtless, to an extent which we are quite unable to conceive at present. It will be one of our chief sources of joy and happiness.

## PEACEMAKERS

"The seventh grace which accompanies humility is, that such a person becomes a peacemaker and a peace-leader. As he is himself at peace with God and man, so he desires that all should be the same; it being only in this way that true blessedness can be found in the world. Hence he is an enthusiastic advocate of peace, and does his best to reconcile parties at variance, himself giving no just cause to others to break the peace. He loves, desires, and delights in peace, and therefore studies to be quiet upon earth. In the Kingdom of Heaven there will be no war or strife, and therefore the peacemakers will find this their true home. With the absence of strife on earth, there will be domestic and public tranquillity. War between nations will cease, any differences being settled by friendly arbitration; while in the personal life, there will be tranquillity of mind with a quiet conscience. Such people will therefore be recognised by God as His own offspring;

hence, this promise is especially applicable to them: 'The peacemakers shall be called the children of God.'

### PERSECUTION

"The last two graces refer to the persecution to which his followers would be exposed, in their attempts to resist and overthrow the Empire of brute force, selfishness, and hatred; and, in its place, to introduce the Empire of Love and Service upon earth.

"Here a new aspect of character is given. As we saw, the citizens of the heavenly kingdom were to be humble, gentle, merciful, with a clear conscience. From this, one would suppose that they were people in whom the sterner element is wanting. But this is not so. When it comes to be a question of standing up for their high principles, following their enlightened consciences and glorifying God, they then show us in what heroic mould their souls are cast—for love animates them to resist even unto death, rather than turn traitors to their most sacred convictions.

The list of these splendid heroes or martyrs is a long one, in every age; but although they were persecuted, suffered, and died in disgrace, yet God is not unmindful of them, but He is righteous to recompense and openly confess them before the assembled celestial world, as being objects of Heaven's warmest admiration and delight—for 'great is their reward in heaven.'

"Let our age recollect that it has been by the long and wearied battles which these heroes waged for right and truth that our present freedom of individuality, of life, of speech, of thought, and nearly every other civilised blessing, are all chiefly to be traced; as it is also owing to their sustained fight and resistance that the world may by-and-by expect to enjoy religious freedom, as well as intellectual, political, and social freedom. By all these the religion of truth, uprightness, mercy, love, and progress is making headway, and will yet unite all the kingdoms of this world into one faith, one hope, one love, one brotherhood.

"You see, therefore, in summing up, that the Beatitudes present God's saints in the Empire of Love upon earth, not only as possessed of passive virtues, but also to an equal extent possessed of the active virtues; thus making all-round and perfect characters for the citizens of the Empire of Love and Service upon earth. True religion will express itself in purifying, sweetening, and enriching individual characters, as well as in making all human relations and interactions harmonious and mutually helpful. There will be an enthusiasm for each other's personal, social, and spiritual welfare, because all are one in origin and destiny.

"You may ask what lessons may we gather from the foregoing, to deepen our admiration and love to the Messiah for his short manifesto to the world at large—the principles of which he had mastered and practised himself in daily life, thus being an example to us all?

"As one reflects upon these Beatitudes, the wisdom which shines through every one of them is recognised as far superior to all other

manifestos, which the Stoics or Mystics have at times brought forward to ameliorate the world's evils and secure a better and happier state of society; say by a better and more equal utilisation of the means of production for the good of all, or, as the Nazarenes have it, by a community of goods. All honour to such men, but their cure does not go deep enough to remove the real cause of trouble. Now the originality of the Messiah lies in this: that he went to the root of the matter, by pointing out that what was first needed was to set the *heart* right, and that the rest would follow ere long. You will therefore notice that all his Beatitudes are 'spiritual states of the soul,' not depending upon any particular condition or occupation of life, or intellectual acquirements; hence the glorious prize of 'true happiness,' which the Beatitudes bring, is within the reach of all.

"You will see this more clearly when you compare the Beatitudes with the world's maxims. The Beatitudes are opposed to pride, covetousness, and selfishness, to a sen-

suous and self-absorbing life; they are opposed also to wrath, fury, revenge, rapine and slavery, and to all insatiable thirst for exciting pleasures, to greed of gold by whatever means, as well as grasping after power by trampling upon others, and such like. All these vices and failings prevent man reaching true happiness; but once persuade men to enrol themselves under the banner of the Messiah, and to practise in earnest the spirit of the nine Beatitudes: then they will lay the foundation of the heavenly and thrice-happy life, which, having commenced in this transitory existence, stretches forth into Eternity with an ever-growing increase of joy and satisfaction in the new blissful and imperishable life, which is past all human comprehension. Again, the Beatitudes will enrich the world with holy aspirations, and inspire it to noble actions; for they are lofty spiritual principles, necessary for the world's true progress and welfare. And the highest of these is the noble principle which, in the spirit of Jesus, makes men and women redeemers and sin-bearers for

others, as well as joy-bringers to a sin-stricken world.

"Lastly, these Beatitudes are not founded on selfish considerations; but they have their roots in our higher nature, which, by consecration, is affiliated with God in a Divine life. In other words, they show us how to share for ever in God's very essence and nature, so as to be one with Him in the highest and best of all senses—namely, in a love which is imperishable.

"Now, in summing up these Beatitudes, and the short addresses which follow them, I would draw your attention to the gist of their ethical teaching. In these you find, for instance, explained what is the chief end of man. They teach the great doctrine of the brotherhood of man, that we should cultivate the spirit of forgiveness, humility, and purity; they teach non-resistance, alms-giving, fasting and prayer, and also as to oaths and vows. They tell us concerning the soul's true treasure, and give the antidote against anxiety; they warn us against hasty or harsh judgments—

and, in short, teach how men should grow in likeness to God, in order to reach true happiness and spread it around them, thus glorifying God."

## NATURE

When the assembly met the following afternoon, to hear the lecture of Simeon, Levi rose, and, addressing the Superior, said to him: "This morning some of our brethren pointed out to me that in your yesterday's lecture you stated that the spirit of humility would also influence our attitude towards Nature. Now, the brethren are unable to see how the grace of humility can have any relation whatever to the outside world of matter, but only towards God and man. Perhaps our revered Father will express himself a little more fully on this point."

The Superior took the speaker's seat, and said: "At first sight there seems little ground for using this expression. I shall, therefore, explain my meaning more clearly by considering for a little our relationship to the Cosmos

with its indwelling life. We saw that to be like the Messiah, we require to realise our true relationship to God and to man. This we have already found to be in cultivating a spirit of loving companionship and active co-operation, which were to be the outstanding features in the new Empire of Love; to be founded upon earth by Jesus, but of which little more than the foundation-stones of his life and teaching, with a small superstructure, have as yet been erected. The truth is, that to found an Empire of Love and Brotherhood upon earth will take many millenniums to reach its completion.

"In considering the Cosmos, of which we may be said to constitute its apex upon this globe, we shall find that co-operation with, and a realisation of, our oneness and dependence upon the whole, are also necessary, if we are to advance civilisation and raise humanity from the brutish state, where it is the abject slave of Nature, to the higher platform. We shall come to realise that only by working in harmony and co-operation with the mighty

forces of Nature, which are under the control of the directing mind of God, will these submit to put themselves under man's control and become his willing fellow-workers, disclosing with untold blessings her manifold treasures for our happiness and well-being. Of all Nations who have sat as disciples at the feet of our Mother Nature, none have shown us such a glorious example as the Greek genius, which, seeking only for proven and reasoned truth, has shown itself supreme in mechanism, in science, and in solving so many of the secrets of the universe—not by guesswork, but by the highest efforts of man's reason. Therefore, in the whole circle of human knowledge the Greeks stand supreme, whether in mathematics, geometry, logic, grammar, medicine; in politics, law, and sociology; in poetry and prose; in philosophy and mythology.

"As a result of their investigations and their practical interrogation of Nature, they came to know many of the laws by which the economy of Nature is regulated; hence

the learned Greeks have come to look upon the Universe, of which we constitute a part, however insignificant, as the expression of a wise, benevolent, and intelligent purpose, working towards a wondrous end of triumph and glory, in which we are individually and collectively interested. Hence to humanity has been promised the Keys of Knowledge, if we strive for them; and with which we may unlock Nature's mysteries and be enriched and blessed with the use and co-operation of her mighty forces, and thus gain possession of her untold treasures for the advancement of the human race in well-being, in comfort, and in material happiness. All this is the result of leaving free the human mind, and not fettering it by antiquated notions or formulas, as has been, and is still, the case in so many despotic and priest-ridden countries.

"The true way, therefore, in which we may intelligently utilise the stupendous forces of Nature to our service, is not by trying to defy them; for if we do, they will sweep us

out of existence. But there must be a wise co-operation on our part. It is here that the 'Beatitudes' come also into operation, and show us the only practical way of success. It is only by forsaking all self-satisfying pride of intellect and prejudice, which is often found to cling stubbornly to what is old, just because it is old. Therefore, only in the spirit of humility, which, while it realises its own weakness and ignorance, yet is wishful to penetrate the mysteries surrounding us on every side, and thereby learn more of God's working, may we reach the truth in Nature. We must begin humbly to put questions to Nature, over which presides the immanent God in every atom of it; and then toil unceasingly for her answers—based upon actual, painstaking experiments and verifications, in the spirit of Aristotle and others, and not upon guesswork.

"Behold, in this simple, humble way, how humanity is slowly building up civilisation step by step, from small beginnings. There has been a succession of wonderful advance-

ments and progress in every domain of science and art, since the world began. These marvels of our age have been reached, not only by intelligent questionings, but also, as said, by patiently co-operating with Nature's forces and then putting them to practical use and convenience. It has been strenuous work, only effected by the sacrifice of much time, of thought, of labour, often even of life, by devoted toilers who are enthusiastically in love with their self-imposed work for the good of humanity and the glory of God.

"Humanity is yet only standing, as it were, on the threshold of the mighty problem as to how to unlock the mysteries of the external world, which has baffled all the past ages. The wonderful success to which humanity has attained in the last 6000 years holds out, therefore, encouraging prospects as to what may yet be in store of blessings and surprises in the coming centuries. All will aid to advance humanity in comfort and true well-being, if brought into the service of the Empire of Love and Truth; of which Jesus

laid the foundation when he preached the 'Beatitudes,' and gave therein the spirit of humility its chief place.

"Still another great advantage which arises from studying the laws of the Cosmos, with the benign and beautiful processes of her immanent life, is that it gradually renders our faculties susceptible to an elevating and refining inspiration—whether in connection with man's intellect, which searches for imperishable truth enshrined within the mysteries of existence; or his imagination, enchanted with Nature's inexhaustible beauties; or his heart which apprehends a Divine love, radiant with boundless joy for which all exists, and in which the whole of Nature, as well as the whole of humanity, are sharers. For all things are one, by being Divine in different degrees. The Cosmos, therefore, is Divine, in the sense that the immanent God, as its Creator, is expressing in and through it, as well as in a higher sense, in and through humanity, His potentialities of power, wisdom, and love —which are infinite—for the welfare, the

progress, the perfection, and the happiness of the whole.

"In closing, let us remember, therefore, that we must cultivate the grace of humility for these high purposes. We get it the more easily, when we realise that behind Nature's forces and elements there is the directing mind of the blessed God Himself—who only condescends, however, to co-operate with, and reveal His secrets to, the humble, trusting, and loving soul. Surely in the presence of the Most High, we may well feel our own ignorance and weakness, and have our souls filled with deepest humility, as the most fitting attitude of mind towards Him!"

When the Superior closed his address, he was warmly and heartily thanked by Levi, the spokesman of the brethren present.

## HEALING

THE following day, the brethren assembled at the usual hour, and, after devotional exercises, Simeon took his place at the reader's seat and delivered his address. He said :—

"Beloved brethren, my subject is in one aspect exceedingly simple, but in another it is also exceedingly difficult. The latter is the case the moment we look upon these acts of healing as miraculous; this, however, again depends to a great extent upon what each one of us understands by a miracle. I think most of you will agree with me that in one aspect everything in the last analysis is rooted in the realm of the unknown and the mysterious. In that sense it may be said that the whole Cosmos is a standing miracle, the ways and processes of which are past finding out. Yet in another aspect it is as true to say

that the whole realm of Nature is found to be subject to uniform laws, which are never deviated from in one single instance; hence a miracle, if it means a suspension of the laws of Nature, has never taken place, nor ever will.

"As a general rule, people's belief in that sense of the miraculous is in exact ratio to their ignorance or superstition. As knowledge increases, the belief in the miraculous loses its hold, and *vice versâ*. Now, in our Holy land, more perhaps than any other which I have visited, the gross superstition and dense ignorance among the common people are deplorable, for nearly everything out of the common is set down by them as being miraculous. This is not the place to remind you of the number of wonder-workers, theurgists, exorcists, &c., whom the common people regularly employ, and upon whom they depend to defend them against evil powers, sickness, &c., and who they think can also perform miracles for their benefit. I need only remind you that our own adepts who visit Engedi, and the districts around the

Dead Sea, in spite of their protests, are looked upon by these superstitious people as being capable of working miracles, and curing all kinds of diseases—whether bodily, mental, or spiritual—sometimes only by a word, a look, or a sign; and they regard them as able to defend them against Beelzebub and all his fallen angels, with their diabolical temptations and assaults upon all and sundry.

"You will not wonder, therefore, if our Messiah had the same experience in the north of Palestine as he had previously when he laboured in this district for so many years, he being looked upon here also, like ourselves, as a wonder-worker, perhaps even a greater one—owing to his being a perfect adept in hypnotic and magnetic powers, which few of us are here. Hence, no one need be surprised at the many wonderful stories which have got into circulation, both during his lifetime and even more so after his death.

"In regard to the Messiah's works of healing, he must have been instrumental in saving or curing many hundreds of people during

his three years' ministry, for he was apparently daily brought into contact with scores of such cases. However, so far only some thirty-three cases have been brought under my notice. These partake of a decidedly miraculous nature—say twelve cases of the immediate cure of leprous persons; eight of blind persons; two of deaf and dumb persons; three suffering of fever; two by demons; two persons were paralysed; one was a lunatic; while two persons were raised from apparent death. It is impossible, however, to find out now, so many years after the events, how these rumours arose, or what truth there is in them. To me, the way in which these arose was that Jesus was expected, as the Messiah, to perform miracles similar to those performed by the old prophets; such, for instance, as Elijah had done, raising children or young people from death, also raising a person even from the grave (2 Kings xiii. 21).

"In addition to the miracles recorded in connection with the Messiah's healing of people, there are a few other miracles pre-

senting the Messiah as having also control over Nature. I have copies with me of the following cases:—

Feeding the multitudes.
The stilling of the storm.
Walking on the lake.
The tribute money.
The draught of fishes.

If you wish to accept them as miraculous, just as they have reached me, by all means do so; but if you wish to have an explanation as to how these, and others, may have come to us in their miraculous dress, while in reality there is nothing miraculous about them, I will ask you to listen to the way in which I look upon their origin and their development.

"Thus, take the cases reported of the Messiah having fed in a desert place 5000 people, and at another time a further 4000 people. I take it that these two miracles were originally parables uttered by the Messiah, who was thinking and speaking mostly in symbols or figurative language.

"Now you must remember that one of the signs by which the true Messiah was expected to prove his claim to his countrymen, was that, like Moses of old, he too would feed the Jews with bread from heaven in the wilderness. Thus Philo calls the Logos 'the bread from heaven' (from Exod. xvi. 4, Psalm lxxviii. 24).[1] In other words, he would perform miracles as tokens of his Divine mission. Jesus, however, gave this expectation a spiritual meaning, and thus, in his own inimitable way, told his hearers of the 'spiritual' bread he had come down from heaven to give them, by which his spiritual Messiahship would be confirmed. It came thus from him as a beautiful parable and a true one, taken in the spiritual sense; but which the bigoted Jews could not apprehend—nor indeed could his own disciples. Hence, the spiritual conception in course of time, and likely after

[1] See *De Profugio*, § 25a, Mangey, i. 566. Further Philo says: "The Manna is the divine word (Logos), the heavenly incorruptible food of the longing soul," &c., &c.

his death, was presented in narratives in a concrete form as an actual but a miraculous occurrence to fulfil the said prophecy.

"I have no time at present to explain the other miracles, but to my mind they should all now be stripped of their miraculous drapery and restored to the sphere of poetry and spirituality to which they belong. Then they would be seen in their full beauty, being both uplifting and true as they actually fell from the Master's lips."

The Superior thanked Simeon for the ingenious way in which he had treated his subject, and with which upon the whole he was in complete accord. He added:—"There may be a fear in some quarters that if the miraculous elements are left out or not accepted, that the claim of Jesus as having been the promised Messiah thereby falls to the ground. This, however, is not the case so far as I can judge; for to me the miracles are in no way essential, especially the moment it is seen that the question is not about a carnal Messiahship, but entirely a spiritual

one. Remember the mission of Jesus as the spiritual Messiah was first and foremost to reveal God in His true attitude as a loving Father of humanity. The revelation was not merely to be done by words, but by deeds. If you realise this, you will better understand what Jesus believed had to be done and said in order to reveal God to the world in all His attractive beauty and loveliness; namely, by living as the incarnation upon earth of the Highest, full of tenderest love and mercy to others—to sympathise with them in their trials and sufferings, helping them, making sacrifices for them, and even dying for them.

"Such a display of disinterested love would truly reveal God to men, and show them in a practical and convincing way what He really is; and therefore we find the Messiah had realised this as being his chief work upon earth, to which he had been called. From this point of view, therefore, must be judged all his deeds of mercy, healing, and helping all he came across. It was by this above all that he glorified his mission. People might call

his works miraculous, and think that these were done in order to magnify himself, using these as stepping-stones to be acclaimed the King of the Jews, and all the honour and glory appertaining to this high position; but Jesus repudiated all such attempts to have greatness thrust upon him. On the contrary, he wished simply to glorify God upon earth and be a blessing to humanity by all he did and said—not to advertise himself, or gain any applause or advancement for himself. Hence, you remember how he tried to escape from the common people when they attempted to elevate him to occupy the royal throne of his father King David.

"Let us therefore recollect that the outstanding difference between Jesus and the leading Jews of his day was that Jesus had realised that the true Messiahship was to be a '*spiritual one*,' whereas his countrymen only looked for a conquering hero to overthrow Rome's galling yoke.

"Owing to his lofty conception, Jesus also gave a spiritual interpretation to all the

prophecies bearing upon the expected Messiah. You remember that the Rabbis had collected as many as 456 passages from their sacred Canon, each giving a sign of an event by which the Messiah might be recognised when he appeared upon the earth.

"Again, we saw that one of these signs was the miraculous feeding in the wilderness, as told in Exodus, to which Jesus, as usual, gave a spiritual interpretation. There was, however, also a certain prophecy to which great importance was attached as a sign of the coming Messiah; namely, the passages in the prophet Isaiah, where he prophesied in a poetic strain:—

"'I the Lord have called thee—to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.' Also:—

"'The eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.' And in Psalm cxlvi. 8: 'The Lord openeth the

eyes of the blind,' which would also be applied to the Messiah.

"Unfortunately, these beautiful poetic metaphors were interpreted literally by the Scribes and others; whereas Jesus interpreted them as a symbol of the 'spiritual miracles' he would perform as the expected Messiah.

"Thus, for example, I have been told that exorcists or reputed miracle-workers, which as you know is a guild by itself, and a very lucrative one, were often put forth by the Pharisees, with the evil intention of discrediting the claim of Jesus by their many works of wonders and the casting out of demons, all done in the presence of the multitudes. These the Pharisees boldly challenged Jesus to perform, in order to prove clearly his claim as being the expected Messiah. In this way they enticed many people away from Jesus, on his tours of mercy and healing. Now, to all these adversaries, Jesus uniformly replied that from the true messenger of God this kind of miracle was neither required nor would be given by him.

As a son of God and Saviour of men, he only performed 'spiritual miracles,' namely, healing the sick souls and raising the souls to eternal life of those who were spiritually dead.

"We find that Jesus clung unflinchingly to the end of his life to this interpretation of the old Scriptures. He distinctly refused to give the Jews an objective sign from heaven, nor to be classed among disreputable miracle-workers.

"Further, Jesus warned his disciples and others not to be offended in him, because he would not comply with the challenge of his adversaries, but his works and his words would justify him; they were all done and said to glorify God, to reveal Him in His loving and beneficent character to the world, and therefore through him to bless mankind in the spiritual sense, which is the highest and noblest of all.

"It is easily seen, however, how misunderstandings would arise at times. Thus I have heard that John the Baptist sent special

messengers from his prison to visit Jesus at the place where he was teaching and healing, in order to learn from him whether he was really the expected Messiah; probably because, if so, miraculous power might have been bestowed upon him by which he could save his cousin from a violent death at the hands of Herod, and which he expected every moment.

"Now to these messengers, Jesus, absorbed in his work of preaching to the multitude, replied practically in the words of Isaiah: 'Tell John the things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.'

"From these words, if they are correctly reported, the messengers might readily infer their literal meaning, but this was not so. It was poetry which Isaiah and the Psalmist had uttered, and it was as poetry that Jesus also used this prophecy; hence the later stories purporting that he had cast out demons,

healed lepers, also persons sick of palsy, with the lame, the dumb, and the blind, as well as having raised individuals from death, or apparent death. These, I take it, were exaggerated stories, which had got into circulation and been magnified by passing through so many hands. They were, in other words, metaphorical representations of the spiritual ministry of Jesus, or we may call them symbols of spiritual realities and conveyed in parabolic form to his disciples and others. After his death these have been transformed into narratives as actual occurrences, supporting the idea that Jesus worked miracles upon the bodies of his patients, and that he also controlled Nature's forces; all this, in spite of his energetic protests when he was alive.

"The contemporary belief in miracles has made it, however, almost inevitable that a miraculous element should sooner or later be introduced as narratives from such parables, or from his teaching and healing. From all this, it follows that we find the miraculous element predominates in the reported deeds of

the Messiah. Of course, from a worldly point of view, it would be a great triumph to the disciples to be able to tell the orthodox and miracle-loving Jews that, after all, Jesus, when upon earth, had actually fulfilled the expectations of his countrymen in the various prophetic forecasts and miraculous events upon which they set so much value, and whereby Jesus could be claimed by them, by the actual signs they looked for, as having been, after all, the promised Messiah whom they had crucified. As already pointed out, the Rabbis tried to prove, by reference to the prophetic Scriptures, that every event and miracle recorded therein would find its counterpart in Messianic days. If Jesus was the Messiah, they must therefore transfer to him all that they already believed regarding him.

"Again, it is reported that Jesus, when he was requested by some learned Jews to work a miracle in their presence, replied that an unbelieving generation would not be gratified by him in the way they wanted, but only by the 'sign' of the prophet Jonah. By this he

meant that Jonah's mission to Nineveh was not to work miracles before them, but to 'preach' Jehovah's stern message, and by his impassioned warnings turn them to repentance; likewise, the sole object of the Queen of Sheba coming to King Solomon was not to see him perform miracles, but to sit at his feet and hear his words of wisdom, for which he was so famous. It is said that Jesus closed by saying, 'and a greater than Solomon is here.' In the view of Jesus, therefore, it was his 'preaching and teaching,' as God's representative upon earth, by which he revealed Him as their loving Father in heaven, which was the only true and convincing 'sign' he offered to the Jews as his heavenly credentials. This revelation of Jesus was—words of heavenly wisdom and grace, loftier and truer than anything which either Solomon in his worldly wisdom, or the prophet Jonah in his warnings and threats, had ever uttered. To reveal God and thereby bless the world; for this purpose, Jesus had come down upon earth. This, I repeat, was the true 'sign,' and the

spiritual miracles which would follow would be the direction in which souls would be converted, raised from a spiritual death to life everlasting, and God thereby loved and glorified.

"After this explanation, you will easily understand that Jesus' method of procedure was to set forth spiritual teaching in symbolical language; hence, he might truly claim that the 456 passages found their fulfilment in him in the spiritual sense, in which they were only true.

"Once more, I repeat that Jesus put forth 'spiritual miracles' as the only mark by which the true Messiah in his enthusiasm for humanity, to save, to bless and beautify it, was to be known. On the other hand, he asserted that false Messiahs would be known by their claiming to be able, from evil motives, and by the aid of the Evil One, to work miracles and cast out demons, and his pure soul repudiated having anything to do with them or being classed among them or their deceptive and evil ways.

"Now, in closing our meeting, I must express to our dear brother Simeon my warmest thanks for the various interesting records he has taken down from oral stories—some I should say not very reliable—which are nowadays floating about so plentifully, and which in many cases have been put into narratives of a miraculous nature; for the Messiah, as we saw, was expected to be a miracle or wonder worker, thereby fulfilling certain specific prophecies drawn from the old Scriptures. These are all, however, worth studying, and I shall consider how best to utilise them for the coming memoirs. I am afraid, however, that these miraculous stories which Simeon has collected will gradually find their way to many Churches, seeing the common Jews are so fond of everything wonderful and out of the common; hence, probably, these miraculous tales will by-and-by enjoy great favour among the converts and the Church at large, and especially so if they appear in other memoirs to be published by Luke and others dwelling in the Diaspora.

"Further, our brother Simeon referred to the five miraculous cases which would prove Jesus' control over Nature, and thus help to overcome the Rabbis' opposition against him. I think that Simeon has given us a very good explanation regarding the first one, the 'feeding miraculously the multitudes in a desert place'; for, as Moses spread a table for Israel in the wilderness, so Jesus took it as his mission to feed his followers on 'divine bread.'

"To Jesus, as we saw, this miracle recorded in Holy Scriptures was a symbolical embodiment of nourishing the soul of humanity, which is famishing, needy, and hungry for spiritual food; but it was not meant to be an actual repetition to be performed by Jesus of the story in Exodus, so as to gratify the inquisitiveness of those Jews who did not believe in him.

"At the same time, I would point out to Simeon that as regards the miraculous feeding of a multitude, he has overlooked including the one recorded in second Kings, where

Elisha the prophet is reported having done the same. Thus you read that when Elisha was surrounded by a band of 100 hungry people, that there were brought to him twenty loaves of barley and corn in the husk thereof, and Elisha said, 'Give unto the starving people that they may eat,' and his servitor said, 'What! should I set this before an hundred men?' Elisha said again: 'Give the people that they may eat, for thus saith the Lord, "They shall eat and shall leave thereof," so he set the bread before them and they did eat and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.' See also Deuteronomy viii. 3.

"Now, if you compare these two miracles from the Holy Scriptures with the two stories which Simeon has collected from oral sources, you will easily see the similarity; and even some of the exact words in Elisha's story are transcribed by a literary convert, and are included in the narrative which Simeon has brought with him. Let me mention that Ananda told us of Buddha's miracle, where

he fed 500 brethren at once from a small basket of cakes. Now, if you study Philo's writings, to which I have already referred, you will see the origin of this as a special miracle, say i. 119: 'The soul is nourished not on earthly and corrupt food, but on the words which God rains down from heaven.' This miracle, therefore, is evidently emblematic of a spiritual banquet, and it represents Jesus as the bread of life, giving himself as spiritual nourishment to the world. In other words, he is the world's spiritual bread; just as in other places, where the Logos is represented by Philo as the fountain of Wisdom, in order that by drinking of that stream we may obtain eternal life. Philo further represented Jehovah as a Shepherd, who had appointed the Logos to be his substitute; to whom therefore had been committed the care of the sacred flock upon earth. Hence, this symbol has been effectively employed in this Biography.

"In fact, so far as I have studied the subject, there are among the Gospel records a very

considerable number of close parallels, drawn evidently from Philo's works where he treats of the Logos mission.

"Of the remaining four miracles, there are two reporting Jesus as walking on the sea and concerning his stilling of the storm on the lake by a word. Both remind me of two miracles not unlike, in the leading outlines, those told by Ananda and drawn from the Buddhist scriptures. To these stories I recollect that Jesus also listened, when during his stay here he sat so long at the feet of the Indian sage, and he may perhaps have repeated these stories under a parabolic form afterwards to his disciples.

"It is not, however, only in the Buddhist scriptures that it is found that their divine teacher was able to still a storm or walk on the sea. These poetical ideas are quite familiar to the Jews, and are found in their own scriptures. Thus in the 107th Psalm you read of Jehovah that he 'maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.' Further, in Psalm lxxvii. you read that

'Jehovah is in the sea. His path is in the great waters and his footsteps are not known.' Also in Isaiah xliii.: 'The Lord's path is in the mighty waters.' Likewise in Job, 9th chapter: 'God treadeth upon the waves of the sea.'

"As some Rabbis have apparently used these four poetical quotations as prophecies of the Messiah, it is easily understood how Jesus should have given them also a spiritual interpretation, the same as Buddha; while, after his death, some literary brother should have translated Jesus' acceptance of this fulfilment in him in a spiritual sense. These were put down in a literal sense as actual occurrences, so as to meet the Rabbis' demands that these quotations in Holy Writ pointed to the coming Saviour, and had therefore likewise been actually performed by Jesus during his lifetime to prove his Messiahship. Thus you see miracles have a symbolical and emblematical interpretation, and not an historical one.

"Now with reference to the two following

miracles, of the 'tribute money' and the 'draught of fishes,' their symbolic character, especially in the latter, is very marked. Jesus had frequently compared his disciples to fishers of men, and the great success he anticipated by their preaching he compared to nets being filled to overflowing with fish, when they went out fishing under his directions. These symbolical illustrations have also come to us as actual occurrences, and the reason of this is easily understood.

"Thus you see how natural events, quite simple and ordinary, served Jesus to convey spiritual truths; and we shall only understand his teaching properly when we remember that his words, as he said himself, should not be taken in their literal sense, but that to the wise 'they were spirit and they were truth.'

"Let me now mention to you that our dear brother Reuben told me yesterday, in the course of our conversation, an incident which happened to him lately when at Ephesus, and which I think you will find both instructive and

interesting. It shows to me how often stories of miracles travel long distances and turn up in quite different dress. In this case they seem to have been adapted to a different purpose, and therefore appear to that extent different from the original."

## EPHESUS

Reuben then recounted his story, saying:—"As desired by our revered Superior, I shall tell you what happened to me when I lately passed through Ephesus. It was the first time that I visited this celebrated city, which, as you may know, is the Emporium of Asia Proper and the gateway of the East. It is the centre of trade and traffic, from which radiate roads in every direction; hence, like Antioch in Syria, our brethren have found it very convenient as a central mission station. I was told that Paul some years ago had stayed there with Barnabas and others, but had given offence to the zealous Jews of the orthodox school, who refused to grant him permission to preach in their synagogues, because he allowed Gentiles to join the Church without circumcision and other breaches of the Mosaic law.

In consequence of this breach, Paul had devoted his energies to preach chiefly to the Gentiles at Ephesus, and considerable success had followed his efforts.

"In addition to him, Andrew, Philip, Aristides, and John the Elder had also more than once passed through Ephesus on their missionary journeys. Unfortunately, none of them happened to be there during my stay. Before going further with my story, let me tell you that I found Ephesus a splendid city, with wide streets, beautiful buildings, with numerous statues and paintings by the most celebrated of Grecian masters, and a large imposing amphitheatre on the slope of the hill. Everything, however, dwindled into insignificance, in comparison to the magnificent temple dedicated to the goddess 'Diana' or Artemas, the mother of mankind, who is the daughter of Jupiter and Latona.[1] Her superb temple is known and admired over the whole civilised world.

[1] Her birthday was celebrated with great pomp and solemn rites on the sixth of the first decade of the month Thargelion (25th May).

It took 220 years to complete the building of it, and it may help you to realise something of its grandeur when I tell you that the temple is supported by not less than 127 marble pillars, each 60 feet high, contributed by 27 kings. Of these pillars 36 are curiously sculptured—some in bas-reliefs by Scopa, the celebrated Greek sculptor—while the rest are beautifully polished. Like other Grecian temples, it is open to the sky without a roof.

"Upon my inquiring, I was told that after the great fire, which destroyed the former temple, it was rebuilt, but much more magnificently—and as we now see it, after the designs of the celebrated architect Dinocrates. The magnificent altar is almost entirely the work of Praxiteles, while the honoured sculptor of the goddess was Canetias. His work is a masterpiece of beauty. He has represented her like Isis, with stars surrounding her head and her feet resting on the crested moon, because the moon is sacred to her. Furthermore, you will find that her drapery is overlaid with pure gold, and that many precious

offerings of personal ornaments are attached to her statue. Other and larger gifts are, however, deposited in the museum, attached to the temple; where are found an enormous number of precious works of art, which have been dedicated to the temple in course of ages, many of them by Persian, Greek, and Roman conquerors on their return from distant lands with trophies of their expeditions—in most cases given out of gratitude to the great goddess, to whom they had attributed their success.

"There are also, among many other treasures, splendid specimens of sculptures by Phidias, Polycletus, Cresilas, and Phradmon, with famous paintings by Apelles and others —especially the former, who has represented Alexander holding a thunderbolt. All these treasures are under the charge of the chief ruler or Temple Warden of highest rank, called Neokoros. As you know, the prosperity of the city depends so much upon the thousands upon thousands of pilgrims who flock to the temple, that the city is proud of call-

ing itself by a humble title of—I believe it is 'Neirokopos,' *i.e.* the 'Sweeper of Diana's Temple,' also called Neocrus, 'Servants of the Goddess,' *i.e.* delighted in doing her lowliest work, and which the city considers an honour to be called upon to perform.

"Her glorious temple is under the personal charge of the venerable High Priestess, called Kosmoteira, who is also Mistress of the Robes to the goddess. The rest of the priestesses are called Melissæ (or bees). These are all vestals of unblemished characters, and belong to the highest families of Ephesus.

"The venerable Eunuch High Priest bears the Persian title of Megabyzos, and all the male priests serving in the temple are likewise compelled to celibacy. The exceeding beauty and variety of these votive offerings, along with the temple itself, which is of perfect artistic proportions and grandeur, are attested by all artists from every land; whose uniform testimony is, that it would require volumes to describe all the wonders of the temple and the magnificent contents found in the annexed

museum. As you may know, the people of Ephesus are notorious for wealth and luxury, but even more for their devotion to sorcery and witchcraft.

"Let me also tell you that the spring month called Artemissian is consecrated to the goddess, she being the symbol of the earth's fruitfulness, the Queen of Nature and the nurse of all life. This month is celebrated in her honour with splendid festivals and worship. The religious festival commences with an enormous procession, at the head of which are the public functionaries and other high dignitaries, all starting from the Senate Hall. They pass through the Coressian gate, to return via the Magnesian gate. The procession winds its way slowly along the marble paved and sheltered road, 35 feet broad, called the 'Via Sacra'—lined on each side with the tombs and statues of the most celebrated citizens of Ephesus and others.

"The procession consists chiefly of a large multitude of devotees, and you will notice, as they pass along, that they carry aloft large

images of the goddess overlaid with gold and silver. These were presented to the city by Caius Vibius Salutaris, as a thanks-offering to the goddess. All devotees carry also, round their necks, silver shrines of Diana, with other sacred talismans.

"As the procession marches along, the air is filled with sacred music, followed by hymns in honour of Diana (Artemis), the world's female Saviour. Every one, besides, waves palm branches, until they approach the sacred precinct, where a halt is made.

"The temple, as you know, is one of the seven wonders of the world, and is the most perfect of Ionic architecture, an octastyle —having in front eight double columns of sculptured marble, each 60 feet high. Fourteen steps lead to the temple platform, which measures 425 feet. It is upon this wide space that the representatives of the worshippers and the city dignitaries are received by the venerable High Priestess, with her vast retinue of dependents and of young virgins, divided into three classes, the latter

clad in pure white raiments, their heads encircled with the festive wreaths of white spring blossoms, while round their neck each of them has the silver image of their beloved Queen of Heaven and Earth.

"As the vast multitude enters the temple through the Pronaos, to witness with awe and veneration the highly ornate and ceremonial service with its elaborate rites, the embroidered drapery which had up till now hid the famous statue is slowly drawn back; and behold! towering over the altar is seen in all her beauty, dignity, majesty, and magnificence, the beloved and adored Diana (Artemis), the female Saviour of the world, the mother of mankind.

"At this sublime sight, the vast concourse of people fall on their faces in adoration and worship. Suddenly one sound, loud as the voice of many waters, fills the vast temple: 'All hail!'

"Let me only add to this description that after the sacred service is over, joy filling every heart, for all depart with a mother's loving blessing, the whole population is now

bent upon enjoying themselves for the rest of the week; hence the time is spent in visiting the gladiatorial shows, held in the large open amphitheatre at the foot of the hill Coressus, said to be capable of holding over 24,000 people. Others visit the Greek or Roman theatres, with their splendid acting; or the Odeon, the beautiful Academy of Music, where concerts are held; or join in aquatic contests on the winding river Cayster, which ultimately falls into the famous harbour of Ephesus called Panorunos. Multitudes go to the public parks, to witness horse-racing, sham skirmishes, or performances by wrestlers and jugglers; while thousands consult augurs, soothsayers, or magicians.

"Let me not forget to mention that near the top of the hill Coressus is the splendid Necropolis of the city, full of beautiful marble statues and other grand monuments in honour of the departed.

"From this hill you will get a capital view of the city and the surrounding country; you will also be able to trace the magnificent forti-

fications and other public buildings in Ephesus, including the newly erected beautiful Temple of Cæsars called 'Augusteum'—not only, I believe, because 'August' is the general name which the Latin natives give to their temples, but the cult of 'Cæsar Augustus' starts with a name which to the Romans is the most noble, most venerable, and most sacred. Anyway, at Ephesus, the temple, as said, is called after Augustus Cæsar. It has an imposing and gorgeous ritual, and is organised and controlled by a wealthy, but most fanatical, priesthood, with a fierce missionary zeal; bent, at all hazards, on carrying out the stern orders from the Senate of Imperial Rome, to do their utmost to promulgate the 'Cæsar worship' everywhere throughout the vast Empire, especially in large cities like Ephesus.

"I have been told that this priesthood is unblushingly claiming that it is a personal, a social, a patriotic, and a religious duty to which Rome is calling every citizen, every patriot, every lover of his country, yea, every true worshipper. If any citizen, especially

one of wealth or of influence, should be so foolish as to try and evade this religious claim, then woe to him! for he is sure ere long to fall under the suspicion of Imperial Rome and be branded as a traitor—with all that this implies—just for having omitted to bow down in worship and to burn incense before the image of the Emperor, thus—it is stated—clearly showing a rebellious spirit, by not having paid divine honours to Cæsar as the head of the State and its divine intercessor before Heaven.

"But I have said quite enough upon this dangerous theme, which, of course, all here must receive in strict secrecy.

"Before leaving Ephesus, with its celebrated and popular Temple of Diana, there is one more sight to which I will draw the attention of any of you who may pay a visit to Ephesus. It is always of the utmost interest to strangers. From the hill of Coressus you can see a large enclosure surrounded by a high wall, which has been erected by the liberality of Asinius Gallus, one of the Roman pro-

consuls. This enclosed space is called the Peribolas or Sanctuary, where from immemorial times the merciful goddess has given protection to all fugitives from justice or vengeance who have sought shelter in her hospitable asylum against the avengers or adversaries who sought their lives.

"Thus you will see that the Temple of Diana is quite unique, and this in a fivefold manner, say:—

1*st.* It is the most celebrated place of worship in Asia.

2*nd.* It is in possession of a splendid museum of works of art.

3*rd.* It is in possession of the largest sanctuary in Asia, or elsewhere.

4*th.* It is in possession of the famous treasure-house for deposits of gold, silver, and precious articles sent by kings, princes, and wealthy people, for safety's sake.

5*th.* It is in possession of the largest ecclesiastical banking establishment in Asia, making enormous profits by

their financial operations; say by advancing upon securities and otherwise to princes in their warlike expeditions, or concerned with great undertakings of utility entered upon by various states or cities, involving vast sums of money—for all of which heavy interests are charged.

"Now, these fivefold divisions are all under the trusteeship and guardianship of the goddess Diana, whose influence is therefore felt everywhere in all ranks of life. Many are the reasons, therefore, which induce people, both high and low, to pay worship to Diana.

"Now, after this long explanation about Ephesus, I must go back to my original story. While I was standing on the big square in front of the temple, admiring this lovely work of art, and reflecting how here we had in this edifice a most beautiful symbol of man's reverence, devotion, love, and worship of woman, represented by Diana, or Artemas, the mother of mankind—in whom was summed

up everything of grace, love, compassion, beauty, tenderness, chastity, and fruitfulness, for the perpetuation and perfection of the race of mankind—when I heard a musical and cheerful voice pronouncing my name; and I found it was my dear friend Apollos, whom I was overjoyed to see again so unexpectedly.

"I told him of the impression which this splendid temple had made upon me. He quite agreed, and added: 'When you consider that love is the mightiest force in the universe, and that the love which is the most unselfish, most tender, and most endurable is found pre-eminently in women, you need not wonder that the wise Greeks and Romans of old have raised their highest conception of Divinity in the impersonation of a woman—as we see her, for instance, in Diana in this temple. If you go within it and see her large silver image covered with precious stones, you will notice that the artist has not presented her as a huntress, or as a young virgin—as in Greece—but as a mother, by

which the idea is conveyed that she represents in her innermost nature a mother's love, tenderness, and self-sacrificing spirit, which encourages all her worshippers to come to her as a child to its mother: for help, for pardon, for peace, and to rest the weary soul in a mother's love and sympathy. Is it a wonder, therefore, if her worship is so much in favour and is ever on the increase?

"'I have often thought if our crusade on behalf of our Christ is successful, and all the numerous diverse Saviours are transferred to him, who will represent them all (and the idea is not preposterous, for we live in stirring times, when men's religions are being tried as if by fire, and most of them are found wanting): well, I repeat, if this supposition should come true, what will become of the female divinities, of whom Diana of Ephesus is now one of the most renowned and beloved? May it not happen that all such female goddesses, now worshipped all over the world, may gradually come to be transferred to the worship of the mother of our Messiah, after

the gods have all been transferred to the son of Mary? There are many reasons why this should happen. At least this is one solution, and one to bear in mind, for you will never succeed in getting the Gentiles to leave at once the worship of the female divinities to which they have been accustomed for ages. They must have a substitute, because the worship of the feminine and maternal elements are fundamental principles in their cult.

"'Now, if God comes to be conceived of as an absent and unapproachable God in His dread majesty, and if Jesus is conceived of as the stern judge of mankind, the uneducated classes will instinctively require Mary to be their intercessor with the Son for them; just as he, on his part, is conceived of as the intercessor with the Father. However, we need not stand any longer before Diana's temple. Let us leave our day-dreams, and turn to practical affairs. Tell me, what has brought you here as a meteor from the blue sky, though much more welcome?'

"I told Apollos, and he informed me in return

that he had been at Ephesus for nearly a month, preaching and teaching chiefly the Gentiles—and upon the whole his success had been considerable.

"We spent the evening together, and in the course of our conversation I said to him: 'Regarding our talk this afternoon before the temple of Diana, I would like to hear you upon one other point. Do you mean to infer that the mission of our Christ will end in introducing the worship also of Mary, his own mother; and if so, will this be permanent in the new faith?' 'Yes,' answered Apollos, 'I believe this will be the result, if our Christ's mission is a success in the Gentile world; and if so, the added worship of Mary may continue for very many centuries—for the reasons I gave you. Say until humanity outgrows its childhood dreams, and defective ideas of God and our Christ; and comes to realise that the question, after all, is not about the worship of a father, or a mother, or a son, which are, after all, only earthly and imperfect symbols, but that a true

religion must be a *spiritual* worship, and then the question of sex or number of persons in the Godhead does not come into play at all.'

"When this time arrives, there will be Monism in philosophy, and the worship of one God in religion; sex and names in their divine aspect will be of no account. There will be only one divinity to worship, who is infinite love; one aspiration, to be like God and love God; one brotherhood upon earth, and one home in heaven, for every soul. This is my creed, but now let us speak of other things. As long as I remember, I must tell you how I was lately put in an awkward position in the following way. I happened to be present at a meeting of our brotherhood, the members of whom are now called 'Christians' in derision by the Gentiles, *i.e.* 'followers of their crucified leader Christ, from Nazareth or Nazara.' On the other hand, the scoffing Jews at Ephesus call them 'People of the new way' (of worship), or 'People of the new method or belief.' They themselves go under the name of Brethren or Saints. They

consider that they are members of one great family and gifted with one common sign—namely, by their 'sanctity or holy living,' like their Master. They aim, in short, at being a visible corporate unity, in faith, in love, in service, and in willing sacrifice for the good of others.

"Let me, however, resume my story. Upon the day of my arrival I was taken by one of our worthy brethren, called Aquila, to their meeting-house. Knowing the poverty of most of those who had joined the new faith, I had expected to be brought to a small upper room, in one of the poorest quarters of the city. To my surprise, however, I found myself in a splendid building in one of the main streets, containing a large lecture room or hall, for the meeting of the various philosophical schools at Ephesus. This Academy belonged to a freeman, a wealthy Greek called Tyrannus, who had been so impressed by our preaching, especially upon the immortality of the soul and the near approach of the end of the world, when our Christ would descend in

glory, that he generously helped our cause by offering us the free use of the hall, when not otherwise engaged—which offer was, of course, accepted with great joy, to the discomfiture and chagrin of those evil-minded Jews at Ephesus who had rejected Christ and, out of dislike to him and his cause, had done their best to kill this new movement started by Paul, to bring the Jews and Gentiles together in our Christ.

"In the evening the brethren met, and the hall was filled, for it was reported that a celebrated teacher would preach, who had been visiting the whole of Southern Galatia as a missionary. In the course of his address, he mentioned having heard in his travels from a reliable party about a wonderful miracle of the Lord, which had only lately become known. It was to the effect that at the beginning of the Messiah's ministry at Judæa, he had been present at a wedding feast, where, when the wine failed, he ordered some water-pots to be filled to the brim with water, and when this was done he made it all by a word into

excellent wine. The telling of this miracle was done in so circumstantial a way, that it gained full acceptance, and all admired our Messiah's gracious act.

"Well, a few nights later, I was invited to address one of the most influential associations of the Gnostics' brotherhood here at Ephesus, where free speech is allowed to all present, for they are lovers of wisdom and seek for truth wherever it can be found.

"When my turn came, I spoke for a long time and carried the meeting with me in all that I said about our Messiah's atoning work, his sacrifice until death, and his beautiful, beneficent life—by which he reflected our heavenly Father in His inconceivable graciousness and sympathy. I illustrated the latter by telling them the miraculous story of the water being turned into wine in Judæa. As I was doing so, I noticed that smiles passed over the faces of several of those present, whom I recognised as being worshippers of Bacchus. I was applauded when I stopped, but all at once one of the audience turned to

me and said that whoever had told me this miraculous story had surely taken the liberty of transferring it to the new faith from the Bacchus cult, where it has been known for many centuries.

"He explained it to the meeting by saying:—'The miracle our brother Apollos describes so picturesquely is evidently drawn from the miracle performed annually at the festival of the Thyiades among the Eleans in honour of Bacchus, who long ago consecrated a beautiful temple and theatre to our Saviour, the divine Bacchus. Now once in a year the priests take several empty jars, fill them with water in the presence of all the people; then shut them up in the festival room of the temple, after first putting seals upon each jar in the presence of the whole congregation. The next day the jars are looked at, and the seals are found to be unbroken. Then the solemn moment comes when the seals are broken, and behold, the miracle has taken place; for the jars are found full to the brim with the most precious wine,

the priests explaining that Bacchus himself had filled the vessels in the interval. The reality of this miracle is attested by all the principal inhabitants, the citizens as well as the visitors; so that there is no mistake about it. Now in the Bacchus cult there is a great symbolic truth prefigured by this miracle, such as is entirely wanting in the way our brother Apollos has altered it. This changing of water into wine by the priests is a symbol to illustrate to the world how Bacchus every season, by a wonderful miracle, transforms the waters which descend from the skies as rain into the red wine from the grapes, which maketh glad the heart of man. This miracle is also said to symbolise the vital sap which vivifies the world, and upon which all life, yea, the whole existence, depends.

"'Now, as our brother Apollos has tried to exalt the disgraced and crucified Christ of the Jews whom he has been led to worship—I do not know why or how—let me do the same for a little in honour of our protector

and divine leader, the Christ of the Greeks. As most of you know, the divine Bacchus is the son of Zeus, the God of Gods, by the virgin Semele. As the miracle of turning the water into wine has shown, our glorious Bacchus is a great worker of miracles. He is the most beloved and beneficent of all the gods at Olympus, by being the giver of joy, hilarity, and good comradeship. He is the healer of sickness and the lengthener of men's lives; he is the guardian against plagues; he is the one by the influence of whose generous wine merciful laws are framed to protect the poor and the helpless. He is the promoter of peace and concord. Being the god of wine, he inspires the poets and awakens bright thoughts; while love and wine always go hand in hand, where he is worshipped and everywhere received with open arms. He is also the sorrow-dispelling god. Those who partake of his sweet nectar become open-handed and generous, and to them the hidden secrets of the future are revealed; in short, by worshipping our divine Bacchus, the world

is lifted from sadness and misery into the realms of wisdom, joy, and good cheer.

"'I admit it is true that our life begins with a cry and ends with a sigh, but our divine Bacchus teaches that the interval between life and death is most profitably spent in the pursuit of all that makes life bright and jolly: for life is so uncertain, and, above all, life is so short. Therefore, enjoy it while you may. Hence, as far as I am concerned, and my father's house with me, we shall ever worship Bacchus; yea, Hail to thee, thou most beloved, thou most beneficent, thou joy-giving and wisdom-inspiring god in Olympia! To thee, thou ivy-crowned god, I offer incense, and worship thee with the richest wines of Siturnia, Cacubau, and Fabernian, for thou art worthy.'

"Moved in my spirit, I replied promptly: 'The worship of Bacchus, we all know, has been in existence for millenniums; but, like bad wine, the older it gets, the worse and more harmful it becomes to all with a healthy and refined taste. When Bacchus

was worshipped as a youth, innocent and beautiful, all that has just been said about him may be true as an idyllic and alluring picture; but look at the reality as we know it now, in the later ages of the world's history. Bacchus has become the symbol to later ages as one who looks upon life as solely made for gay enjoyment, for fleeting pleasures, and for self-indulgence, and behold, what is the result! Tell me, who are the bulk of his worshippers in these latter days? Are they not the libertines, the profligates, the betrayers of the innocent; above all, the drunkards and the gamblers, closely followed by the criminals, the murderers, and the dregs of society everywhere? It is like some fairy palace of which I have heard, where the entrance-hall is enticing, being wondrously beautiful to behold, where sweet voices and soft music invite all to enter: but behold, within are the torture chambers, where the unsuspecting, the thoughtless, the dandy butterflies, who only live for gay pleasures, frivolity, and feverish, unhallowed excitements, enter,

against the advice and warning voice of wisdom—enter only to become the victims of hideous demons and tormentors, who drag them down to their final destruction.

"'Friends, worshippers of Bacchus, my heart bleeds for you! Fain would I persuade you to enrol yourselves under the lofty banner of our Christ, who will keep you in the right path, and who gives all his comrades heavenly joys and true, unending pleasures. Ah, believe me, the only true religion, as revealed by our Christ, lives its fullest life in inner fellowship with God: just as Christ did when upon earth, who lived in the continued consciousness of God's loving presence in his soul. It was his highest happiness, the sunshine of his life. Again, what are all your Gnostics (lovers of wisdom) groping after as man's highest good? Listen, and I shall tell you. It is the wisdom which learns that only in the way Christ lived is life's secret solved. It is having God immanent in the soul, so that no outsider, no priest, no exorcist, no intermediary, will be needed; and in this close fellowship of

mutual affection, the soul lives and breathes in an atmosphere of love.

"'Again, if you ask, How shall we know if the immanent God dwells in our heart? I answer, God's loving presence is manifested by His elevating, purifying, and transforming your souls into the likeness of our Christ. Neither the Gnostic cult nor the Bacchus cult will save mankind in the sense of evolving the spiritual, the divine side of man's nature. Yes, friends, believe me, man's sanctification on earth and man's glorification in heaven are the rewards of living the Christ-life: for in his likeness, and in his only, will humanity stand complete in its spiritual beauty.'

"Great impatience was shown during my address, of which this is a short outline; and at last the murmurs and angry protests from a large number of the audience caused the president to raise his hand, which meant that I had to stop, as another subject would now be taken up.

"Let me explain to you that the rule is,

at these Gnostics' gatherings, that all religious discussions have to be treated in a calm, philosophical spirit—free of all bitterness, passion, or recrimination, as becometh those who are Gnostics, or lovers of wisdom. Unfortunately I forgot myself, in the excitement of the moment.

"After several speakers had for some time discussed Indian mysticism—and in which several Orientals took part—as the meeting was about to close, another worshipper of Bacchus claimed the right to say a few words.

"He turned to me, saying that he had also a grievance against the new faith. This was, that he had learned that a well-known scene in one of the religious dramas of Bacchus had been imitated by the Christians, and used in connection with a miraculous story which had got abroad about one of their chief leaders, called Peter or Simon, once upon a time, when he was cast into prison.

"In the miracle-play referred to, Pantheus, King of Thebes, captured one of the Apostles

of Bacchus called Acetes. They shut him up in a prison; but while they were getting ready the instruments of execution, the Lord Bacchus heard in Olympia the prayer of his apostle, and behold, an angel appeared and the miracle took place, for the prison doors came open of their own accord and the chains fell from his limbs. He passed unnoticed through the iron gates of the prison, and when they looked for him, lo! he was nowhere to be found. Now the disciple of Bacchus insisted upon it that Peter's miraculous story was simply derived from the above ancient drama.

"Apollos, before leaving the meeting of the Gnostics, promised his questioner that he would make some inquiries regarding the *bona-fide* nature of the reported miraculous escape of Peter from the prison, and advise him the result at a subsequent meeting.

"Still another complaint was raised before the meeting broke up—namely, that an episode in the mystery play of Dionysius had been transferred to the life of Jesus, appa-

rently by some Greek converts to the new faith. The reference was to the scene where Dionysius, the Liberator and Saviour of the world, is seen entering in triumphal procession, riding on a colt, the foal of an ass—to receive the acclaim and homage of a multitude of disciples, who, amidst their rejoicing, spread their garments and palm branches in the way, this being the usual reception of royalty.

"Apollos explained, however, that more likely this episode had been drawn by some converted Jewish Rabbis from the old prophetical book of Zechariah, where they would read of the royal reception which would be given to the Jews' Messiah when at last he appeared upon earth:—

"'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion,
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.
Behold! thy King cometh unto thee,
He is just, and bringing salvation,
Lowly, and riding upon an ass,
The colt, the foal of an ass.'

"Whether such an event actually took place at Jerusalem during the lifetime of Jesus, Apollos could not be positive; but at any rate, if the prophecy referred to Jesus, this event must have taken place—for the Scriptures could not be broken, and the recorded life of Jesus was woven more out of passages claimed to be prophetic forecasts than from events actually narrated or witnessed by contemporaries. In this way Apollos succeeded in securing that the subject which had been raised should be shelved for the present.

"Now I have come to the end of telling you about my visit to Ephesus; and I must therefore close, thanking you for the patience with which you have listened to me."

The Superior thanked Reuben for his interesting stories, and added:—"The miracle about Peter, of which Apollos heard, is new to me; so I am unable to express an opinion. Probably it is only a coincidence; but in any case I have no belief in the miracle with reference to Peter, although I cannot explain

how the story has arisen. Perhaps a simple escape from prison — told with the usual Oriental exaggeration, by which every unexplained event is transmitted as supernatural.

"As regards the other miracle, if it is true that a mistake has taken place, attributing to our Christ the incident about changing the water into wine, it shows how some of our missionaries (perhaps converts from the Bacchus cult) in their zeal to gain converts have little hesitation in drawing their illustrations from pagan sources if it helps them thereby to glorify their new Master; or, in other words, paint a moral and adorn a tale in honour of our Christ, thus giving to these old legends and dramatic incidents a new and higher meaning.

"In the story of the miracle at Cana, for instance, the preacher might use it as an illustration, showing the Messiah's willingness to be helpful in an unexpected difficulty which had arisen during a domestic festal event. This was important, for by many the Messiah was described as an ascetic like John the

Baptist, who frowned upon all innocent cheer and amusements even at a wedding feast—yet we know that the enemies of Jesus went to the other extreme and upbraided him as being a wine-bibber and a glutton."

The Superior continued: — "Before we separate, I want to remind our brethren that this is one of our last meetings with our visitors, who have redeemed their promises by coming here to the commemoration services of our late beloved Messiah. Our dear brethren have also given us the fruit of their studies and inquiries in all likely places—of the words, the deeds, and the events connected with our Messiah's life and mission.

"I shall now take time to draw up a short biography for the use of our poor brethren, the Ebionites and the Nazarenes; but I have quite made up my mind to exclude everything which savours of a miraculous or supernatural nature. I am doubtful also as to how to treat many of the reported sayings and parables, which have led to so much misunderstanding and have given quite wrong impres-

sions about Jesus' mission, as we discovered in the course of our studies. One thing has impressed me more than anything else—and that is, that nearly the whole material placed at my disposal concerning wonders and references to prophetical utterances ought all to be understood in a symbolical or figurative sense, if we are to enter into Jesus' true meaning. If we do this, however, everything becomes luminous, and we shall come to admire and love him more than ever; indeed, only by doing this shall we see with him eye to eye, and understand what he himself felt, what he lived for, suffered for, and for which at last he died as an accursed criminal.

"There on the cross, however, you see incarnate love, bleeding, suffering, and dying, his divine soul blessing his enemies and praying for them that they might be forgiven—for they knew not what they were doing. Owing to this precious legacy of love, bequeathed to humanity, Jesus will never be forgotten; forever he will be to man his highest ideal of what God is, and in him God

will see, as in a prophecy, what humanity will yet become. We know now that all are divine, but in various degrees. Humanity we may call a son of God, a child of His love, destined to grow up in the spiritual likeness of our Redeemer; growing up step by step into his imperishable beauty, chosen from all eternity to be a sharer with Christ in his likeness and in his sufferings, as also in his triumphs and in his glory."

## THE CLOSING SCENES OF THE MESSIAH'S CAREER

To Levi had been allotted the above subject, and he commenced the next day, after prayer, by saying:—

"Beloved brethren, in studying the early life of our Messiah, we found the subject involved in uncertainties as regards what actually took place, but at the same time there was thought to be an absolute certainty found in the definite prophecies bearing upon this special subject.

"Now, in dealing with the closing events of our Messiah's life, we are in a similar position. True, as regards the last few days of his life, his capture, his trial, his scourging, his death sentence, and his demise: as to these, all eyewitnesses practically agree, but after his death various miraculous reports have gained credence, such as concerning his resurrection

and ascension. The question naturally arises as to what truth there may be in these rumours current everywhere.

"In connection with this, you must remember that from the point of view of a follower of the Messiah he is not called upon to argue the question with cavillers, or attempt to prove anything by witnesses or otherwise. To such a one the question can only be settled by falling back upon the sure word of prophecy, which to them settles everything finally.

"Now the followers of the Messiah, after his death, claim that they can prove, from Holy Writ, that the following events were long ago foretold:—

The Messiah's rejection by the Jews.

The Messiah's violent death by his enemies.

The Messiah's death being a sacrifice for his people's sins.

The Messiah's resurrection from the dead would confirm this.

The Messiah's ascension to heaven.

The Messiah's speedy return in glory, victorious over all his enemies.

"The followers of the Messiah also believe implicitly that five of these prophecies must have been already fulfilled in Jesus, because he is to them the truly anointed one, *i.e.* the Messiah or Christ, about whom all the Scriptures prophesied. It is therefore only the last prophecy, regarding his second advent, which is to them a future event; however, in regard to this they continue in daily expectation of living to witness its fulfilment—namely, the Messiah's return in glory.

"You can therefore understand that no written memoir or oral teaching will be accepted as satisfactory by these believers unless they contain the fulfilment of the above-named prophecies. Whether these can now be proved as having actually occurred, as foretold, they will not discuss; hence, all criticism is set aside as useless.

"Let us next look more carefully at the views held by the Jews in the dispersion, and I cannot do better than give you the gist of Apollo's remarks to me, of which I took

notes at the time. He said, referring to this subject:—

"'I do not wonder that, especially among the thoughtful portion of educated and orthodox Jews, whether in the Diaspora or in the Holy Land, they will have nothing to do with Paul's doctrine of the vicarious atonement, which he teaches that the Jewish Messiah has secured by his shameful and accursed death, and by which he is believed by Paul and others to have redeemed the world for all time coming.

"'Such an idea of a human sacrifice is, however, entirely contrary to Jewish ethics, because the Jewish law in Deuteronomy ordains that every man shall be put to death for his *own* sin, and not for the sin or crime committed by any other person; and in Numbers you read that no ransom shall protect the murderer against the arm of justice, and you find this confirmed in Ezekiel.

"'In the Jewish law, you see, therefore, that the principle of equal rights and equal responsibilities are fundamental. In fact,

Jehovah must abhor vicarious atonement, when it means the slaughter of an innocent person to atone for the crimes of others. Hence you can easily understand that all orthodox Jews will denounce such teaching. With all such people Paul or his school will never succeed, whether in the Holy Land or in the dispersion: for the difference between the two schools of thought is diametrical.'

"But while this is true as regards Judaism, Paul's scheme of salvation is in full accord in many respects with the sacred beliefs of the leading pagan cults, and it is to this aspect, therefore, that I wish now to draw your attention."

Levi continued his remarks by saying:—

"As I have studied the question carefully, I have come to see that the new faith, as expounded by Paul, has every element of success, and may in course of time make great progress among the heathen. You may wonder at this idea, but the reason is that for one thing it is very similar to other pagan cults. Thus, Paul's faith, as you know, is

not only built upon a Saviour from Heaven having appeared as an example, or a prophet; but that this Saviour is also a *victim*, one who has suffered and died for others. Now, this conception you will find in the history of all the other of the world's most famous Redeemers; they were all 'suffering divinities.'

"To give you a few examples. You find this in the mysteries of Osiris, Isis, and Horus in Egypt, in Atys and Cybele in Phrygia, in Ceres and Proserpine in Eleusis, in Venus and Adonis in Phœnicia, in Mithras in Persia; also in the Roman cult, as well as in India.

"In all these systems, which have been believed in by millions upon millions of worshippers, and that for untold ages, you will find the doctrine of Atonement for sin by the shedding of blood. In every case it was the expiation of sin by the sacrifice of a god; or, in other words, it was the idea of redemption of sin through the sufferings and death of a divine incarnate Saviour, who must be born of a virgin — which idea is

likewise found in all these religious systems, these various ideas being, in fact, all inherited from the ancient sun-worship.

"Now I come to my point, which is that Paul's conception is practically a pagan one which he has centred in the Jewish Messiah; hence, it follows that in the view of this school all the other of the world's Redeemers are merely types of him. The Jewish Christ is therefore to Paul and his followers the crowning of the edifice at the fulness of time, in whom all these creeds have had their true fulfilment to the Jews and Gentiles alike.

"If this is accepted, the result is that the outstanding types in their ancient religious histories must be found also in the history of the Jewish Christ—namely, his tragic death, his resurrection, and his ascension. In his memoirs, therefore, these must necessarily be found as fixed dogmas, whether they can now be proved or not; and not only so, but other minor incidents found in the types must also reappear and be incorporated in

the history of the biography of Christ. Let me name only one or two.

"The sun must have been darkened for hours at his crucifixion, and the effects of an earthquake must have been felt: because we find this to have accompanied the death of all the world's Redeemers, by celestial signs of darkness and earthquakes. In the words of Virgil:—

"'The sun covered his luminous head with a sooty darkness, and the impious ages feared eternal night.'

"Christ must also have descended into Hades, because all the other Saviours of mankind have done so previously—such as Osiris, Horus, Adonis, Bacchus, Hercules, and others. They remained in the underworld for three days and nights, to liberate those in bondage. These events must therefore appear in the memoirs, and be taught in the Churches.

"As regards the most stupendous event. All the prominent Redeemers of the world rose from the grave and ascended to heaven. Thus Osiris, the Egyptian Saviour, after being

put to a violent death, rose from the grave and bore the title of the 'resurrected one.' Others, like Horus, Atys, Mithras, Bacchus, Adonis, and Apollo, shared the same fate. Even to this day at Antioch the death and resurrection of Adonis, Apollo, and Mithras are celebrated at their respective temples; also, all over Greece and in other countries.

"As you doubtless know, in these leading pagan cults the life of their respective Saviours was celebrated for ages, and is still annually presented in a species of dramatic performances, to which the initiated only are admitted. With superstitious awe they witness the miraculous birth, the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of their respective divinities. At these secret meetings are also celebrated the sacrament of baptism of the initiated, at their admission into a lasting brotherhood of the Mystics. There is also celebrated the Eucharist or memorial feast, which their gods had with their worshippers before their death. In the Eleusian mysteries, for example, they have regularly sacrament of

the Lord's Supper, where bread is divided among them; being looked upon as the symbolical body of their divinity, such as Demeter (Ceres), the goddess of corn, after which wine is drunk, the symbol of the blood which Bacchus (the god of wine) sheds for all his worshippers—hence it is customary for them to say, in their figurative language, that they are eating the flesh and drinking the blood of their gods at their Eucharist. Indeed, they actually believe that by this sacrament they become sharers of the Divine Nature, obtain forgiveness of their sins, and are sure of a happy immortality. This sacrament is also celebrated when the initiated are consecrated and initiated into the mysteries of their respective cults.

"'Now, if the Jewish Messiah is going to represent and sum up all the chief pagans' celebrated divinities, which seems not at all unlikely to happen in course of time, a great part of these ceremonies and sacraments to which they have been accustomed for ages will also, we may expect, be gradually transferred

to the new cult as a matter of compromise—and the teaching and dogmas of the Church will be modified accordingly, they being in many ways almost identical. This may be taken as a foregone conclusion. Like the Hindu Brahmins, the new faith of Paul's will conquer other faiths by compromise, concession, and lastly, by assimilation.

"Lastly, the Jewish Christ must not only have arisen from the grave, but must also ascend to heaven, and for exactly the same reasons as before. These are based upon prophecies, upon types, and upon symbols found in all other religious systems, as well as believed in by the Jews' mystic sects. Let me give a few names to confirm this, such as Zoroaster, Æsculapius, Adonis, or Tammuz; Apollo, Osiris, Atys, Mithras, Krishna, and others—but as the time is getting on, I shall not detain you longer."

The Superior expressed his cordial thanks to Levi for his illuminating address, and closed the meeting by saying:—

"I am well aware of the various pagan

beliefs and ceremonies to which our brother has alluded. I am of opinion, however, as far as we are concerned as collectors or editors, who wish to stand by facts, that we ought to confine ourselves to describe only the actual leading events which led to the Messiah's death on the cross, and stop at the temporary resting-place where the authorities laid the one body or the three bodies until the religious festivals at Jerusalem were over.

"As regards the rumours of his bodily resurrection and ascension, which have come to be believed by the Nazarene and Ebionite disciples and others, this was almost to be expected; because Jesus himself expressly stated it to his near followers during his lifetime—but only in veiled or metaphorical language, which, however, was taken by them as actual events to be looked for. The fact is, that the idea of a bodily resurrection and ascension rests upon a misconception. It was not a carnal, but a 'spiritual' resurrection which Jesus, as an Essenic mystic, looked

forward to after his death. The future has amply justified his expectations; seeing how his spiritual mission, instead of having come to naught at his death, as his enemies hoped for, has risen into a new life and power since his death on the cross. This 'spiritual' resurrection is, besides, the only one which he could have desired; for by this the world will justify the Messiah's claim. It will bring him honour and glory in ages to come.

"I can quite understand, however, if the outstanding features of the pagan creeds of similar imports are being gradually incorporated into the new faith, that most of their central beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies will likewise be carried over or introduced into the new Church and made part of it, though perhaps under new names."

Reuben now asked permission to speak, and said:—

"As it will no doubt interest you to have some of these pagan myths explained more fully, to which our revered Superior has

alluded, have patience while I describe such a scene to you.

"One of my friends, Demetrius, a converted Greek, told me of having first been a worshipper of the popular Mithras cult. This has also got a temple at Antioch, called Mithrion. The 7th month and the 16th day of every month is sacred to him, who is the sun-god of purity, of moral goodness and knowledge. You know the Mithras cult is flourishing—not only in Persia, but it has spread to Armenia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Cilicia, and other places, even to Greece and Rome. I may explain that Mithras is looked upon as a mediator between God and man. He is the suffering yet triumphant Saviour. He is called Prototokos, *i.e.* 'the first-born of the gods.' His cult is provided with the sacraments of baptism, of penances, the eucharist, consecration, and others. It likewise contains the doctrines of the fall, the incarnation, the atonement for sin, and the resurrection. Mithras, as said, being originally a sun-god, was taught of old as having been born of a

virgin on 25th December; because the constellation Virgo was on the horizon at the time of the sun's birth, and because the sun was then in the sign of Aries—then known as the lamb—at the vernal equinox which governs the year. Hence Mithras is also called 'the Lamb of God,' and 'the Lamb that takes away the evils of the world.' His birthday on 25th December is a day of universal rejoicing, being celebrated with illumination and public games. Besides the public worship, the Mithras cult has also its mystic festivals, which consist of sacrifices and ceremonies; also dramas or theatrical representations, presided over by the Hierophant, or the High Priest.

"Let me describe one of these latter, which Demetrius witnessed when on a visit to Rome, where the cult has gained numerous adherents during the last 125 years since its first introduction into Italy.

"It was towards the end of March when, as an 'initiated' and before his apostasy, that Demetrius witnessed the festival connected

with the death and resurrection of Mithras. The crowd of initiated present saw before them the figure of a young man, apparently dead. He represented Mithras, who by his sufferings and death had worked the eternal salvation of his people. The priests, after having lighted the sacred flambeau, anointed the image with costly spices and wrapped it in fine linen clothes. The funeral ceremonies were accompanied with dirges, groans, and loud cries from priests and people, all clothed in the garments of mourning. After this, the priests carried the image to an empty rock-tomb, expressly prepared for it. They laid it in its grave-clothes on a litter. The priests then watched the tomb till the midnight of 25th March, when the initiated thronged round the sepulchre to shed tears, and manifested the greatest grief. But just as midnight arrived, the place upon a sudden being plunged in deepest darkness, rumbling noises were heard, so loud and terrific as if an earthquake was shaking the place: when suddenly the stentorian voice

of the Hierophant was heard crying, exultingly:—

'Rejoice, oh sacred Initiated,
Your God is risen;
His pains, his sufferings, his death
Have worked our salvation.'

"At the same moment, lights burst forth from all parts; and as the disciples pressed forward, they saw, to their delight, that the sepulchre was empty. The miracle had been performed, the resurrection and ascension of Mithras had taken place; and amidst the rejoicing of all present, accompanied by sacred songs and music, all separated—with mutual congratulations. The sacred drama had come to a close. Priests and people now went home, to clothe themselves in the white festal robes and to celebrate the joyful events during the ensuing holidays.

"I shall now bring my remarks to a close. I have said sufficient to convince you that if the Jewish celestial Messiah, the second Adam from heaven, whom Paul and his followers

are preaching, is going to supplant or assimilate the Mithras and similar cults: then it can only be done by looking upon these earlier Saviours of the world as having been simply types of our Christ, so that the ceremonial worships connected with their respective lives and deaths (for all are practically alike in these) may be transferred to the new faith and form part of it—with the bulk of their paraphernalia of rites and doctrines; and, in short, all that is of special importance to the pagan worshippers. If this was done, a large multitude of worshippers now flocking to the shrines of Mithras, Bacchus, and Apollos, &c., might, without great difficulty, be converted to the worship of our Christ. Indeed, all these cults have very much in common with the teaching of Paul.

"You may ask me, however, why should the pagans relinquish their old worship in favour of Christ? For instance, if the Mithras cult is already provided with the sacraments of baptism, of penances, of the eucharist, and so forth; and if it likewise contains the

doctrine of the fall of man, the necessity of the advent of a heavenly Redeemer, the incarnation, the atonement for sin, the resurrection and ascension: what inducements are there for the pagans to embrace the new faith? Have you anything else, or anything better, to offer them in their stead; or do you propose simply to transfer all the outstanding beliefs of Mithraism to the new cult of Christ, and embody these in his memoirs, if they are not there already?

"To these queries I would reply, 'Most certainly: for the new creed, as expounded by Paul and Apollos, can easily prove its superiority in every way over the pagan faiths.'

"*First*, Paul and Apollos would point out that all these pagans were polytheistic worshippers, whereas the new faith is based upon a pure *Monotheism*, in which God is at last truly revealed. It is a Monotheism, moreover, superior both to the Jews' and the Zoroastrian dogmas; for only in the new faith is our God, who is blessed for evermore, to be seen in His true character—not merely

as a lawgiver, a judge, a king, or as a creator, but His innermost nature is revealed as embracing an overflowing divine love towards the human race. His is a love as deep and lasting as that of a father's, a love which shows mercy and forgiveness to all repentant sinners, a love which will not cease until it has raised each human soul into a loving relationship and communion with Himself —in order to bless each of them for ever. Tell me, in the Pantheon of the Greeks, the Romans, and the rest, has God ever been presented before in a more attractive, a more beautiful, and a more winning manner than has been done by the Jewish Messiah?

"*Secondly*, the Jewish Messiah is the last and the noblest incarnation upon earth of the Divine, of whom all other of the world's reputed Redeemers can easily be shown as having been only types and forerunners of our Christ. You will tell me, however, that you see no difference; because they all alike came down upon earth for the same purpose — namely, as Saviours of mankind. In one

sense this is true, but it is not the whole truth. All the world's Redeemers came down to suffer for sin, and Jesus followed in their steps in this; but *he* came also to do what is just as important, namely, to remove the *cause* of sin—that is, the rebellious heart and the corrupt nature of man. Now, none else of the world's Redeemers ever had such a mission in view. And how did the Messiah proceed? By accepting the revelation of God in His attractive glory, each believer will receive a new heart, full of love and gratitude to God and with love to man. Not only this; but, unlike the other Saviours of the world, whose records of their lives on earth were full of blemishes and shortcomings, Jesus will ever be the world's brightest and truest example of a moral and spiritual perfection of character—based upon love, service, and sacrifice to God and man. All this combined will, therefore, have the power of subjugating the world, and thereby demonstrating the superiority of the new faith, proclaimed by Apollos and Paul, over all others.

"I am not finished yet—nay, there is one other important factor to take into account. This is the Lord's 'second coming.' Have you tried to realise what this means to a suffering world, crushed by despotism and cruelty—a world of misery, sorrow, poverty, wretchedness, and sin? The glad proclamation and the certainty of the Lord's 'second coming' will be as a loud trumpet message to each and all who are sorrowful and in trials or sufferings, that now at last help is near at hand from above. It will thrill the world with joyful expectation, and will cause thousands, yea, tens of thousands, to join the ranks of the army of the Jewish Messiah; so that they may participate in the benefit, the great salvation he is bringing with him, along with the honour and glory which will be the portion of all his people in the new heaven and earth, now so near at hand—reserved for all who join him betimes before it is too late.

"The other Redeemers of the world died and rose from the grave, but none of them

ever returned to earth again to complete their mission of the world's salvation. Not so, however, with the Jewish Messiah. He died, and rose from the grave, and ascended to heaven, like the rest; but, as said, over and above this, his mission is not yet completed—for he has promised to return to earth in glory within a generation or two, to establish a new world of light, joy, and happiness, of justice, of love, and of truth, where all who are his will rule in triumph over a renewed and redeemed world. What a splendid promise to believe in! It is like the sweetest music from heaven, filling the heart with joy, satisfaction, and gladness. Yes, at last the 'golden age' is to come down upon earth, of which the prophecies of old sung in glowing strains; and it is to our Christ to whom this gracious mission has been entrusted. Glorious message to each and all, for the deep longing of mankind shall at last be satisfied; their hopes so long deferred shall be at last realised! Behold, the Lord will be seen descending from heaven in glory and

splendour, with the armies of heaven in his train, in order to bring with him the new heaven, and the waiting earth will acclaim in jubilant strains: 'Hallelujah, even so come, Lord Jesus!'

"Now, what need I say more? Is it any wonder if, with this additional powerful attraction, and being such a precious promise, that the pagan world, with its failing prestige and widespread scepticism, its sufferings and its sorrows, should leave the ancient mysteries and their shrines and flock into the Kingdom of Heaven so near at hand, and so fervently preached everywhere by Paul, with his devoted and enthusiastic band of followers?"

The Superior thanked Reuben for his remarks, and closed the discussion by saying:—

"You remember the many misconceptions and wrong expectations which were abroad about John the Baptist when he appeared. We find that the same, and even more so, has been the case, and still is, regarding our beloved Messiah. To me—and I believe through all time coming—where he is properly

appreciated, Jesus will stand as the highest incarnate representative of Divinity upon earth, in all his lovable, attractive beauty and majesty. Nothing, therefore, must be said or done to mar or disfigure this lovely vision of beauty, or to drag it down from its lofty position. It is for this reason that I am so jealous to present him, in his coming memoirs, free of all defects or blemishes. You find this done, however, in most of the records our friends have collected from various quarters. Let me make my meaning clearer, by putting these clumsy artists of the divine portrait of Jesus under different groups.

"We have *first* the *Anti-Pharisaic* group, which has disfigured the beautiful character of Jesus. This group has come chiefly from the Ebionites, poor, downtrodden, hot-headed, fanatical, and quite unorthodox in their creed, being also followers of John the Baptist. Hence they were despised and shunned by the precise Pharisees, as by the proud Sadducees. In return, these outcasts of society gave vent to their hatred of the orthodox

party by using wild and defiant language against them when suitable opportunities arose. Considering, however, that they belonged to the lowest strata of society, you cannot wonder that their words breathed coarseness and abounded in offensive epithets, which unfortunately were afterwards put in the mouth of Jesus after his death, as having been used by him—very likely because during his lifetime he had identified himself with their sect from the time of his baptism by John. We must not, however, allow their vulgarity to be associated with our Messiah's refinement and loving, self-forgetting, and tender heart—free from passion, coarse language, and abusive words. These would disfigure his portrait of refinement, of gentleness, and of courtesy. Therefore, sweep them away at once. I shall not permit them to mar the face of tenderest pity, mercy, and gentleness; our pattern of forgiveness and humility, as far as the memoirs are concerned—in which I shall be interested.

"*Secondly*, we have the group of the *Pro-*

*phetical* school, those who imagined what the Messiah would say or do when he appeared—drawn from isolated texts in the Scriptures, and twisted from their proper context to suit their fancy. These have done and are doing an immense deal of harm, for the portrait they draw of our Saviour is in many places quite a caricature, and upon their fanciful expectations we find improbable stories are being put into circulation, and parables turned into narratives of a miraculous nature. Let us remove all these misconceptions from the majestic figure of Jesus, who does not require these ragged trappings or draperies to heighten our admiration of his nobility of soul, his mercy, pity, and the helping hand he showed to all who came to him.

"*Thirdly*, we have the *Apocalyptic* group, which disfigures the character of Jesus and his peaceful aim to conquer the world by love alone. They present him as a prophet of woe, destruction, and bloodshed, who gloats over the overthrow of the Jews' enemies, and looks for a coming world of carnage and

horror. Away, however, with all these revengeful threats, which are put into the mouth of our Redeemer—loving, long-suffering, and gentle. These quite misrepresent the loving Messiah, who came to bring peace upon earth, but not a sword.

"*Fourthly.* Besides the prophetical group, there is another group which we may take separately. This is the *miracle-loving* group, from whom have emanated all the miraculous cures and control over Nature attributed to Jesus—no doubt done with the best motives and with desire to honour him. But as truth was dear to Jesus, dearer than life itself: so let us, like him, cling to truth and dismiss all these miracles, and put their proper value upon them as being only symbols of spiritual truths.

"*Lastly*—not to weary you—there is the *Extreme* group, amongst which I will class the extreme people, some who called him an ascetic, others who called him a wine-bibber and a gluttonous person; or a fanatic, a deceiver, a child of Beelzebub, a blasphemer, a charlatan, a rebel, and what not. Sweep

away all these misconceptions and erroneous assumptions. They spoil entirely the true likeness of what Jesus was when on earth.

"Once more, let me repeat that the true, life-like portrait of our Messiah is the one already portrayed. See him, for time and eternity, as the highest incarnate representative of Divinity upon earth. He is, and ever will tower, high above all other of the world's numerous Divinities, when he is seen in his wondrously loving, attractive, spiritual beauty —revealing what God really is, and revealing also what humanity really is, Divine like himself, and therefore all sons of God, children for evermore of the Highest. In this conception is the soul's true rest, satisfaction, and happiness. It is by this perfect presentation of forgiving, helpful love, that he will draw the world to himself in admiration; until all gradually become like Jesus in his beautiful character and lofty aspirations, thus reflecting him in his wondrous beauty, just as he reflected God himself when here upon the earth."

The Superior now invited his three guests to spend the evening with him, in order to have a private conversation on the prospects of the Messiah's cult outside the Jewish fold—say, throughout the whole Roman Empire.

Simeon was unable to express an opinion as to the outside world; but, so far as Palestine was concerned, he was convinced that the whole movement was slowly dying out. Only some of the lowest classes of society were still loyal, and waited impatiently for the early return of the Lord from heaven—to introduce a new earth, free from sin and the oppression of the Romans. But he himself was sure that this advent would never take place.

Levi, from Jerusalem, was quite as explicit, if not more so, as regards Jerusalem. In his eyes, it was a lost cause. Instead of peace

coming with the Messiah, his advent had brought war and rumours of war. It looked as if ere long the Roman army would appear to quell the serious disturbances and the threatened rise of rebellion throughout Galilee and Judæa, even in Jerusalem itself. What the end would be, nobody knew; but to him the prospects were gloomy in the extreme. He feared even for the safety of Jerusalem and its temple, if the Zealots and the Sicarii continued their defiance of the Roman power.

He closed as follows:—"My honest opinion is that, as regards the Holy Land, and Jerusalem more especially, leaving out the unorthodox and despised sects of Nazarenes and Ebionites, who swarm, however, nearly everywhere: that the new faith has been a complete failure. The old and orthodox faith still rules supreme."

The turn now came to Reuben, who said:—"At one time I was as sceptical and pessimistic as you are; but since I met Apollos, and heard him, my views have completely changed,

and I am now as enthusiastic and hopeful of the Messiah's triumph as Apollos himself. Before I go further, however, let me tell you something of Antioch, which city you have not visited. It is likely to become an important aid in the advancement of the Messiah's cause in the world.

"Antioch is situated on the left bank of the river Orontes; it lies about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, and 23 miles back from the Mediterranean. Its progress has been amazing since it was first founded by Seleusis, about 300 years ago. It now ranks about third city of importance in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria. The climate is genial and salubrious. At present it is the residence of the Imperial Legate of Syria. It is truly called the Queen of the East, for here is the commingling of Oriental and Western elements, and the trade passing through Antioch is enormous and ever increasing. Let me shortly describe the city as it would present itself to you upon your arrival.

"What will first excite your admiration is the city wall, broad and high, more than twelve miles in circumference. Next you will see the splendid avenue, nearly five miles in length, straight as an arrow, called Stoa Herodis. It traverses the entire length of the city, having four parallel rows of columns forming a broad road, and in the middle it is open to the sky. The avenue is paved with blocks of white marble, lined with trees, adorned with statues, and furnished with a colonnade on both sides all the way—to shelter from sun or rain. Of public buildings I shall only mention the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, situated on Mount Silpius, and several Greek temples of beautiful design. Let me also mention the large theatre, the necropolis on Mount Casius, the many splendid public baths and buildings, the one more imposing than the other, some of the columns even overlaid with gold. There is also the newly-erected monument of the Emperor Germanius; further, the great aqueduct bridges over the deep ravines, each arch some

60 feet high. The magnificent Forum, with the celebrated statue of Antioch by Eutychus, is a masterpiece. Finally, the whole city is domineered and protected by the formidable citadel erected on Mount Silpius.

"There is a constant stream of thousands upon thousands of visitors, from all quarters, pouring daily into this Eastern metropolis. In short, in point of situation, of architectural magnificence and resources of enjoyment, Antioch ranks after Rome and Alexandria, and many even prefer Antioch for pleasure as well as for gain.

"But while you would be greatly interested in Antioch, the city would pale in comparison with its world-wide suburb called Daphne, considered one of the wonders of the world. It lies about five miles from Antioch, and is connected with the city by a suburb called Heraclea, the road passing among beautiful villas and gardens. In addition to the famous cypress groves of Daphne, it has a pleasure park ten miles in circumference; and it is also famous for its fountains, its hot springs, its

medicinal wells—in short, for every combination of salubrity and beauty made by nature and art. In the park are held the Olympic games.

"In the grove of Daphne there is erected a splendid temple of Apollo, to whom an annual festival is held in August, attended by a multitude of people. In this temple is a colossal statue of Apollo, erected by Bryazis. Apollo's birthday is celebrated on the 7th of May. On this day there are festivals in honour of Apollo, with every expression of delight in music, song, and dance, for Apollo is the favourite deity of Antioch. He is to them the guide of the sun, and the guardian of mankind; the god of beauty and oracles, of music and of healing, besides being the conqueror of monsters and a god who is easily appeased. You see, therefore, that both Antioch and Daphne are charming places to visit, but alas, although famed for their magnificence and wealth, they are not less notorious for their vices. Daphne especially is a sanctuary for a perpetual festival of vice,

revelry, dissipation, and extravagant display of luxury and folly.

"Now, you may ask me what has all this to do with the Messiah's triumph; and I answer, very much indeed—for Antioch is the centre of the commerce of the East and the West, where all nations congregate, where there is an open door for preaching the 'goodspell' without let or hindrance. And I believe that this profligate and luxurious city will become the cradle of the new faith, the centre of a world-wide propaganda, as a missionary religion which will embrace the whole world. Antioch offers every advantage in this holy warfare, which the zealous Paul and others will know how best to utilise to the rapid progress of the Messiah's Kingdom.

"With these preliminary remarks, let us now consider more particularly the prospects of the new faith.

"I have heard with sadness the despairing utterances of Simeon and Levi, and I can quite well understand that as long as the sacrificial system is in full force at Jerusalem, with the

despotic sway of the priesthood, no other result can be looked for; the more so, as Jesus did not support the popular expectations of a warrior King to overthrow the Roman Empire.

"If we leave home, however, and turn our thoughts to the Jews in the Dispersion, I am glad to say that there are more encouraging prospects; besides, the number of Jews in the Diaspora is at least four times more than live in the Holy Land. They may be divided into three parties. There is, roughly speaking, the old school of Jews, who cling tenaciously to their father's faith in every jot and tittle, as interpreted to them by their Rabbis and Scribes. With these people, the new faith has no chance whatever of an entrance. If they had their own way, every advocate of the new faith who appeared at their respective synagogues or public meeting-places, and whom they look upon as deluded followers of the false Messiah from despised Galilee, would be refused a hearing. Indeed, they would think they deserved to be stoned to death, according to their ancient laws.

"The new faith has had more chance, however, with the younger part of the Jewish communities in the Dispersion, especially when it is presented to them that 'Jesus was a reformer of Judaism, a restorer of the primitive religion of Israel.' These young minds are more inclined to imbibe new ideas, seeing also that they are daily mixing with those of Greek, Roman, and Oriental extraction. In addition to these, there is a considerable portion of Jews of mixed marriages, who are also disposed to look with favour upon the new faith—which dispenses with the expensive sacrificial system in Jerusalem and its Temple worship, attendance at which is very troublesome and means loss both of time and money. So that among many of these the reformed Judaism has gained their full approval, and their foreign wives are generally easily led over to the new faith, in preference to the old.

"Then there are, of course, large numbers of poor Jews of the Ebionites' faith, each and all of whom have practically adopted the new faith. Altogether, fair progress has been made

both with Jews and Gentiles in the Diaspora, particularly by Saul or Paul of Tarsus, who, you know, with the Jewish mystic sects who pin their faith on the advent of a second Adam, tries to accommodate the new faith to their particular beliefs, which have certain attractions for people of this gloomy cast of mind and upbringing. These parties do not, however, exhaust the field of activity open to the new faith.

"There is another, which I believe in course of time may become a most important one; and that is, the thoughtful minds in the Empire, whether Romans or Greeks, who have emancipated themselves from their ancient faith, although they may nominally still belong to them—such, for instance, as the Stoics and others. All these people have lost faith in the popular deities and in their worship, hence among the more educated classes scepticism is rife. They have all, however, open minds towards the higher truths, and of which their reason approves.

"This is a magnificent field to work, and

counts millions of people; for it covers, practically speaking, the whole civilised world of educated pagans. Compared to this, the faith of the Jews is a parochial affair, especially if we only think of those dwelling in the Holy Land. Remember that the Jews scattered in the Diaspora will number, as said, fully four times more than those in Palestine; so, whether the latter join the movement or not, this will not count for much.

"Let the new faith throw itself, enthusiastically and with heart and soul, into this glorious work of converting a world. Yea, who knows, it may after centuries of toil conquer by moral force and spiritual weapons the whole Roman Empire, with all its many dying faiths —including the worship of the Cæsars, which latter aims at drawing the various religious and superstitious cults into one universal faith under the rule of the divine Cæsars who claim to be deified after death. It is claimed that some even during their lifetime become sons of God, and to them worship is therefore due by all and sundry who are under the sway of the

Roman Empire. I verily believe, with our revered Superior, that the message with which our blessed Christ entered upon his campaign will succeed—which he has derived from our Essene prophetic school; namely, to save the world by divine, unselfish love, holiness, and obedience. That is, by a love which extends to all humanity and which looks upon the Supreme as revealed in His highest manifestation as a Father of mankind—with a father's love, pity, and mercy for each and all. This message, I believe, is destined to conquer all other faiths, and to become the religion of humanity. This message the world stands in need of; and if the Jews despise it, lo! it ought to be preached to the world at large, among all nations and among all tongues.

"Fortunately you know that God in His overruling providence has lightened this work considerably, by uniting the whole civilised world, and even also other distant countries sunk in barbarism, under one power—an imperial power which no one can overthrow, a power, moreover, which is tolerant in the

matter of religion; because under the Roman Eagle all faiths are equally welcome and equally protected: provided, of course, they do not try to overthrow the Empire or meddle with its laws for the good of the State. One other advantage is this, that the Roman Empire, by new-formed military roads, by regular traffic by sea and in other ways, has made intercourse between the different nations upon earth more easy and inexpensive than ever was known before. Add to this, that human knowledge is centred in one cultivated language of greatest perfection (the Greek), which unites all nations and makes communications of thought ever so much easier, as well as knowledge more accessible! All these, and many more, are in favour of the spread of the new faith.

"But there is one other advantage about which you may know little, but which in my eyes, more than anything else, will contribute to the spread of the new faith all over the Roman Empire. This is the 'secret religious societies' with which the Roman

Empire is, so to speak, honeycombed everywhere—not for political purposes, but only for religious propaganda; and let me therefore devote some time to this subject, which may be used advantageously for the spread of the new faith.

"Nearly all these secret societies have their clubs, a sort of freemasonry linked in a brotherhood. These have emanated at one time or other from Grecian, Zoroastrian, Syrian, Indian, Egyptian, or other pagan faiths and mysteries. With many of these, inquiring Jews had also associated themselves for differing reasons. Under various designations, these societies after truth all practically mean that they are 'seekers and lovers of wisdom.' The heathen elements, most of them associated with ceremonial observances and rituals, of course predominate; but these have undergone manifold modifications and accommodation in the process, and to a great extent are slowly losing their ancient power and prestige. The new faith, however, I am sure will succeed in this direction, by drawing to itself the

universalistic elements which are embedded in all these religious systems, and thus secure the victory over the exclusiveness of Judaism. In the new faith the whole of mankind may enjoy the Divine favour by believing in God as their father, in humanity as their brethren, in Jesus as the representative of God and their Saviour by love; whereas the old Jewish faith requires its converts to receive circumcision and hate all foreigners, and also to adopt all its social and oppressive religious and expensive customs, which few of the pagans could be induced to do. It is impossible in half-an-hour to go thoroughly into this intricate subject; but the moving spirits in the new movement have not been long in seeing that if they are rejected by the Jews, they need not be cast down or give up the campaign—for there is still much land to possess which the Jews can never conquer, and which the other older heathen faiths have little life or enthusiasm left to grapple with, even although much of it is presented in some form of mysticism or theosophy.

"I think, however, it is quite likely that if the new faith makes converts among these secret societies, it will have to adopt many of their rites, rituals, and beliefs; hence it will more likely be a case of 'compromise,' rather than an entire absorption of the new faith over the other ancient ones.

"Let me make my meaning more clear. Thus, when lately I visited Antioch, I found that the number of secret societies which worship there is amazingly large. Apollos told me that in his view the success of his mission lay in winning over the ancient faiths current among the Greeks and the Romans, and this could only be achieved by compromises. As stated, educated people had lost faith in the popular polytheism, and a wonderful willingness was shown everywhere among the best minds to return to monotheism. True, the Jews have this faith, but the belief has degenerated with them to a belief in a God who has practically retired from the government of the world and who rules it through delegates; so that practically to

them the Jewish faith is little better now than their own faith in Zeus or Jupiter.

"Now, it is at this point that the new faith of Jesus will have an opportunity of gaining over the world, with its proclamation of one God; not one distant who is unconcerned about His creatures or the weal or woe of the world, but one who is always near each and all—indeed, is immanent in the world and in every part of it. He is a God, moreover, whom they can worship as a Father, a God of Love, Joy, and Bliss, who wishes all to be like Himself—making the world a home of love and brotherly fellowship, of which Jesus is his representative upon earth as a pattern, an ideal, a ruler of the heart. By His love he will be their Saviour and Emancipator, to raise them all to a still higher life of spiritual beauty and wealth.

"It was with this message that Apollos had boldly gone into some of the Gnostic or Oriental secret religious societies, with which he had also formerly affiliated himself as a

member, and thus secured a chance of proclaiming the new faith to them. His daring step was, however, successful, for he told me that among many of these Gentile seekers after wisdom he had gained converts, who had not, however, thereby broken entirely with their own societies; but in this way the glorious truth got a lodgment in their hearts, say the truth of Monotheism, of one God having to be worshipped as love, with a father's heart of love towards the human race, and men treating each other as brethren. Apollos was convinced that in this quiet way the whole Roman Empire might be gained over in course of time to the only true religion which he preached. I was greatly interested, and asked him to tell me more of his personal experience. I asked him how he would be able to reconcile the pagan ideas regarding the descent of their own Gods upon earth to the Redeemer whom he proclaimed.

"'Oh!' he said, 'it is quite possible to do so, especially for me who had the famous

Ananda, the Buddhist monk, as my teacher in Indian lore when I lived at Hazazon Tama. There was a discussion last week on this very subject, when I tried to reconcile the conflicting beliefs of the Gnostics in favour of Jesus, the Jews' spiritual Messiah. Some of the speakers referred to the miraculous births and accompanying wonderful events which were found in the Greek and Roman, as well as in the Chaldean, Persian, and other mythologies, and wound up by saying that if another Redeemer should come upon earth, he could only confirm his mission by also being recognised and presented to the world in a similar way, for it was only by such signs that he could be realised by the world at large.'

"When all had their say, Apollos said that he rose up and claimed the right to reply in the name of the Jewish Messiah, in whom he believed and whose representative he was. He began by saying that all the previous faiths and beliefs in the world had had their true fulfiment in the Saviour of men whom he preached, and in the one God of Love,

Wisdom, Power, and Bliss, whom this Messiah revealed to the world, before he passed away —to return in the Spirit and live henceforth in the hearts and consciences, for time and eternity, of all who believe in him.

"My friend told me further that he said to his audience:—'You know that Antioch is celebrated for the cults of the beautiful Apollo and the ivy-crowned Bacchus, and I wish to point out to you that both are only forerunners of the Messiah whom I preach, and who came to earth to give the glorious message which you have heard from me. You will find this proven when I tell you that, like Apollo and Bacchus, both being the sons of the Highest through Virgins, so our Messiah is the same. There was joy in Olympia when Apollo was born upon earth in lowly surroundings, and the same happened to our Messiah, as was foretold beforehand.

"'You know the Divine Apollo is called "The willing Saviour of distressed mankind," also Pythios, "the God of Healing," just the same as our Messiah is also called the world's

"merciful Saviour" and "Healer" of the world's distresses, who by his beautiful life, his matchless love, and his willing sacrifice to a cruel death for truth's sake, became the pattern, the model, the Saviour, and the revealer of God, whom he declared as being our Heavenly Father, and not to be presented as a cruel Despot. Yes, Adonis, Horus, Bacchus, Apollo, Jupiter, Zeus, and Mithras, and the rest, are all types of our Messiah. The whole pagan religion of every nation is typical of our Messiah in his life, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension, all of which he shares with the other former Redeemers of mankind.[1] Therefore, when you accept our Messiah as God's incarnation upon earth, you leave behind the lower conceptions, in order to receive the highest and truer faith. All Indian wisdom is also prophetical of our Messiah, just as the Jews'

[1] The common features of the pagan religions were: Virgin births, Divine sonship — sacrificial death — resurrection — salvation of the worshippers by Baptism, Eucharist, and other rituals, including diligent attendance at other sacred festivals.

prophetic books—to which you must add, all that is found in other sacred writings bearing upon this subject: all are prophesying our Christ, and all find their truest fulfilment in him. Hence, to this universal religion of the world, which supersedes all others, you ought to attach yourselves; for it will bring you heavenly truth and wisdom, will give you a purified and tender conscience, a happy life —living with our Christ upon earth as your example and guide, your sins forgiven—and a glorious immortality with God the Father when life here is ended.'

"In conclusion, Apollos told me his private opinion by alluding to the greatest triumph of all, which he believed is in store for the Messiah in course of the centuries; and that is, to be elevated to take the place in the seat of the divine Cæsars of Rome as Son of God and Saviour of man. This also is prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures, where it is said that God will give to His Messiah 'the heathen for his heritage, and the uttermost end of the earth for his possession.'

"Now, let me remind you that the religion of the Roman Empire is a composite system, made up of many deities from many sources, and with many rituals and various sacrificial systems. For political reasons, all religious cults have hitherto been tolerated, but the Cæsars of Rome know quite well that there cannot be a solidarity, a unity, a coherence, among these numerous nations and opposing factions, with diverse languages and creeds, unless over and above the local deities they also gradually learn to worship a common centre, a Divine Incarnation—which should bind all the conquered nations into one faith, as they are now under one political and imperial sway. This would give unity, stability, and strength to the whole religious community everywhere by introducing a supra-national Unity. It would preserve the Empire for ages to come, by being firmly cemented by this strong tie of a religious nature, which is the most binding of all.

"Hence has been introduced the apotheosis of the Roman Cæsars after death, and some-

times even during life. One of his titles is the 'Son of God,' this name being inscribed on public buildings, and every Roman who enters the temple is expected to show his allegiance by bowing to the statue of the Emperor and to burn incense before it. To the Roman world the Emperor is therefore not only the centralised embodiment of the greatest empire the world had ever seen, but in him is also seen the incarnation of heaven, who claims the worship of the whole earth and already receives the slavish adulation of multitudes of people. Uniformity of worship and uniformity of beliefs are the crying needs of the times, and these the cult of Cæsar-worship will supply.

"Yet, in comparison with our Messiah, the Cæsars must be rejected, and the Messiah, it seems to me, is sure by-and-by to be elevated to occupy his place as an incarnated object of worship: for he will be to the world an incarnation of the ideal of holiness, of spiritual beauty, of self-sacrifice for others, with an intense love to his Father in Heaven. In him

will be seen the moral beauty, the majesty of sweetest, most attractive love. He will represent the true incarnation of divinity in humanity, and will personify idealised humanity in divinity—by love, by service and self-sacrifice; while in contrast to this the Cæsars represent, after all, only brute force and the baser passions of men—such as their pride, their selfishness, their self-glorification, their vanity, their cruelty, and their lust. And to the credit of humanity I believe it will ultimately choose Jesus, the idealised Messiah or Christ, as the true incarnation of divinity in humanity and as personifying idealised humanity in divinity.

"I must close, however, and you will admit that the prospects are favourable for the extension of our Lord's spiritual Kingdom upon earth, even although it is rejected by the bulk of the Jews. Hence, let me end my remarks by expressing the fervid hope that the day will yet arrive in the world's history when our Messiah will be acclaimed as the world's spiritual King, its loftiest example, and its

only true Saviour; of whose reign there shall be no end, but even long after the Cæsars of Rome have lost their sceptres—his Kingdom will flourish and advance to still greater triumphs."

The Superior expressed his delight at the cheering message brought from Antioch, with all of which he heartily agreed; except he had a foreboding that if Reuben's sanguine anticipations were ever realised, it might only mean that the Roman sceptre, by incorporating the Messiah in its creed, would make the spiritual rule as despotic, or perhaps even more so, than was its political despotism over all nations. Everybody knew that the worship of the Cæsars was meant to consolidate the despotic powers of the Empire, and perchance this might be even intensified under the cloak of the name of Jesus, the Christ, or the Messiah.

## THE LOGOS THEORY

When the Superior had ended, Simeon asked permission to speak, and, addressing the aged Saint, said to him:—"Before we leave, I would feel obliged if you will explain to me the difference between Paul's teaching about the world's salvation and the new school which has lately arisen in Alexandria. Paul, we all know, advocates the belief in the incarnation of the second Adam, who, he teaches, was sent down from heaven to save mankind from sin and punishment by bearing God's wrath upon the cross. In opposition to this, I hear another school in Alexandria is now spreading the belief that the Logos of Plato and Philo has been identified with our Messiah, he being to them the son of the Highest, he being also sent down from heaven for the identical purpose of being the Saviour

of the world. I may be wrong, but to me it seems that these two views are practically identical."

The Superior replied:—"Yes, at first sight you are right, but actually the two views are diametrically opposite in the methods of the soul's salvation.

"To me Paul's main position is wrong, being in the first place dualistic, like that of the pagans; and secondly, he has had to resort to a legal expedience conceived in the language of criminal law, which is shocking to all who are jealous of Jehovah's true glory: for in effect Paul's theory misrepresents and degrades Jehovah's exalted and adorable character.

"Let me explain it briefly. With one of the mystic sects of the Jews, Paul believes that there are two Adams, mentioned in Genesis; the first is the earthly one, the second is the spiritual one, or Adam-ha-Zadmoni. The temporal curse pronounced by Jehovah upon Adam and Eve, these mystics whom Paul follows, is said to have

affected also the whole human race, not only for time but also for eternity. In short, upon these false premises Paul has built up a doctrine of original sin, of total depravity, of an unconditional election by the foreknowledge of Jehovah, of eternal punishment of the non-elect and of eternal happiness of the elect—all based upon Jehovah's sovereignty; conceived as if He were an Oriental, despotic ruler and arbitrary Judge, who would pour His fiery wrath on the criminal transgressors of His laws, unless a substitute could be found. In this way, as stated, Paul has disfigured the beautiful character of God, as revealed by our own sect. Now, by the assumed greatness and heinousness of the first Adam's sin, and the terrible punishment due to it, all arising from eating part of an apple: the infinite worth of the second divine Adam, who brings the required atonement by the shedding of his own innocent blood, is thereby brought into strong relief. For this reason God's wrath is removed, and the redeemed sinners, out of gratitude, become the faithful followers of the

second Adam in a life of holiness, and thus become also the children of the Highest and heirs of glory.

"In this round-about way the salvation brought by the Messiah is preached by Paul and his school. You see, therefore, that Paul's view of the Atonement and the reconciliation between God and the sinner is based upon the 'sacrifice by blood,' just the same as all the pagans' ancient faiths; hence you can easily recognise how it comes about that Paul's preaching and teaching are finding so ready a response among the pagans in the Diaspora, especially among the large number of followers of the Mazdism faith, which has so much in common with Paul's own teaching, and indeed to which he is also leaning strongly, trying to adapt himself to their rites and ceremonies.

"Let me try to explain the other view of the soul's salvation, achieved by the incarnate Logos, as taught in Alexandria; but first I will seek to brush away the myths referred to and found in Genesis, which have led

astray both Paul and his mystic school. It has been found to be originally a Babylonian legend, transferred to the first chapter of Genesis, without having the slightest claim to be received as authentic history.

"I remember many years ago, when Jesus lived among us—indeed, it was one of the last years of his stay—that this subject of the Logos formed some interesting discussions at our weekly meetings, in which I had to take my share. One of our brethren had so tenacious a memory that he was able afterwards to put in writing, and almost without a slip, all that was said on these occasions. These rolls are still in existence in the archives of our library, if any of you wish to study this interesting subject.[1]

"Now, after these introductory remarks, I come to explain the new view to which Simeon has referred. It has arisen in the philosophical school by converts from the Jewish faith, but who were also adherents of Philo's

[1] See "Our Lord's Preparation for the Messiahship," p. 132 &c.

philosophy; in fact, it is merely an expansion of his teaching, which has been engrafted upon the Christian faith. As most of you will know, the doctrine of the Logos was current among nearly all ancient nations, even so far back as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, &c. It was revived in Greece by Heraclitus; followed by Plato, the Stoics, the Jews in the Captivity, in the Apocalyptic literature—while in our generation, it has been specially studied by the celebrated Philo in Alexandria.

"Among the Greek philosophers, the idea of the Logos stood:—

1*st*. For the Divine Reason; and

2*nd*. For the expression of its thoughts, by word or speech.

Whereas among the ancient Jews the Logos idea was known in the Chaldean tongue as Memra or Dibbura, both being used as a substitute for the name of Jehovah in His communications with the world. Thus you find it used in a poetic sense, as the power of God's '*words*': see Genesis i. 3–24; Psalm xxxiii. 6,

cvii. 20, cxix. 89, cxlvii. 15; Isaiah xl. 8, lv. 11.

"Another idea was to personify 'Wisdom' as dwelling with God, and being His chief hypostate in the work of creation (Proverbs viii. 1, 9th chapter; Job xxviii. 12); also in the Apocalyptic literature. Still another designation was the 'Angel of Jehovah,' or the 'Angel of the Covenant,' who appeared as the representative of God (Genesis xvi. 7; Exodus iii. 2, xxiii. 10; Judges xiii. 21).

"When we come to Philo, we find that his setting forth of the Logos partakes more of a personal character than any writer before him; but in order not to offend the monotheistic Jews, he writes in very guarded language, which could be understood either in a figurative sense or as a plain statement actually making the Logos a second god. Thus he refers to the Logos as the son of God, the first begotten son of God, the eldest son, the express image of God, the revealer of God, the interpreter, the instrument of Divine emanation, the creator of the

world, the High Priest and mediator for the honour of God, the Intercessor, the sinless one, the eternal bread from heaven, &c.

"Summing up all these and other titles, Philo speaks in a threefold way of the Logos:—

1*st.* As being the Son of God.

2*nd.* As being the creator of the world.

3*rd.* As being the Saviour and guide of men.

Now we come to the new view, which breaks with the orthodox Jews, making the Unity of God into a Trinity of persons; and it transfers Philo's ideas of the Logos to our Messiah as being the incarnate Logos, making him also a sharer of the Godhead in all the attributes specified above.

"In other words, we have the Logos presented as God's son incarnate in humanity, who was yet before the creation, in close communion with God and in the nearest and dearest kinship as His divine Son. In short, the Logos is represented as incarnated in our Christ, he being not only the creator of the

world but also the illuminator of men's minds and consciences.

"Up to this point you may see little difference between the two schools. Let me therefore point out to you that all former thinkers, both pagan or Jews, had conceived the Logos as representing Jehovah's chief *attribute* of Divine Reason or Wisdom, with absolute Perfection, which among the Ancients was the highest predicate of Divinity. To this exalted attribute Jesus contributed, as taught by our sect and as God's Prophet, man's Saviour and Guide to Heaven, other even more important and sublime truths:—

That God is perfect love.

The truth of the Fatherhood of God.

That humanity is Divine in nature like the Messiah, because they are all God's children; and

Therefore now and ever they will be objects of God's infinite love, mercy, and sympathy.

"From this it follows that the new school does not see humanity as Paul does—namely,

as fallen creatures under the curse of the law, from whom nevertheless is demanded perfect obedience of a perfect law. This, of course, it is impossible to give by any one who is imperfect from the start. To Paul, God is an Avenger, a stern Judge, a consuming fire, until His fiery wrath is assuaged by the bloody sacrifice of the second Adam from heaven.

"On the other hand, in the new school, the conception of Jesus, drawn originally from the Essenes' school, is taken over in all its fulness—namely, as already mentioned, the 'Fatherhood of God.' This was Jesus' dearest belief; to him, and to us, every other relation of God must be harmonised and find in this its centre. Therefore the true teaching of our Christ sums up the nature and character of God, in the radiant and attractive presentation of God's Divine Fatherhood which embraces the whole human race. Not only this, but the mutual relation between God and the soul is *Love*, now and for ever; hence it is in the possibility of sonship that our soul's salvation is found.

To gain God's forgiveness is therefore to return like the penitent prodigal son, with contrite heart and broken spirit; sorry for having offended such a loving, merciful Father, who only lives and longs for our happiness and well-being. The tie, therefore, which binds the soul to God, is not so much derived from the intellect as it is from the heart. Love lifts a man out of himself, and teaches him to live in another and for another.

"Again, suffering is not the contradiction of love; it is one of its methods to lift the soul heavenwards. The object of punishment is thus not retribution, but regeneration; hence, only from this point of view, of love ruling the world, can we understand how mercy and justice are no longer antagonistic; they are different aspects of love. The conception of God's infinite love and mercy towards His children becomes subservient to the deepest need and interest of humanity. The salvation which the Messiah brings is by love to turn men from the habit and power of sin, which degrades and blurs God's divine image of

Beauty and Love in their souls. Remember, every soul is in God's sight of infinite worth, and all souls are subjects of His limitless love and His warmest affection.

"Being God's own offspring, we have come into the world that we may gradually become more and more like Himself in His own eternal happiness and glory. The goal of our spiritual aspiration is to become more like God, always radiating the warm sunshine of love and helpfulness to others. This divine love leads the soul towards that self-realisation which is oneness in character, life, aim, and purpose with the infinite, loving heart of God; for God's love in our hearts is the foretaste of heaven, the pledge and earnest of all that is to come.

"In short, to live the life of love is to live the life of God. Thus you see, in conclusion, that the human race is not living in a lost world, as Paul would have us to believe, to be redeemed in some substitutional way; but we are living in a world which is in the process of advancing from lower to higher stages of

Beinghood, for we are all created in order to live, in time and in eternity, in the spirit of sonship to a God of love."

The Superior ended his remarks, and Simeon, after a pause, replied in the following words :— "We are all deeply indebted for the explanation of the two views in connection with the Messiah's mission. Evidently the atonement by blood advocated by Paul, with his other erroneous ideas, must be given up, in view of the higher truth of atonement by love which the Alexandrian school advocates, and by which it more truly reflects the spirit of the Messiah. It seems to me also that Paul wishes to save the souls of men by the 'terrors of the law,' whereas his opponents wish to save the souls of men by 'love's persuasive pleadings,' following in this in the steps of the world's Redeemer. May I therefore take it, revered Superior, that you think the Alexandrian school is the fullest and final exposition of the Messiah cult?"

The Superior replied :—"No ; I confess that I admire the Alexandrian school, but there

are also flaws in it which I should like to see removed. However, it is getting late; so let us part till to-morrow, when I shall try to explain my meaning and the conclusion I have arrived at on this all-important subject."

## GOD IN HIS THREEFOLD ASPECT

Next afternoon, when the brethren met as usual, the old Superior, after prayer, asked Simeon to open the discussion. Simeon began therefore :—

"With reference to the two theories we had before us yesterday, it seems to me that there is a certain unreality about them both. Unfounded hypotheses appear to form the major part in these speculations.

"Take, for instance, the theory of Paul. Our revered Superior explained yesterday that the imposing scheme of redemption by Paul turns out to be based upon a false assumption, without a particle of historical truth; hence, it cannot have any permanence once the light of truth exposes its fallacies.

"Take next the new Logos theory. There seems also a want of reality about this scheme,

although in several important respects, as regards its working out of the redemption aspects, it is decidedly superior to Paul's involved scheme.

"Perhaps our revered Superior will give us his views, to guide us in forming our opinions."

The Superior replied, saying:—"I quite agree with Simeon's remarks. I shall now show you that we must also be compelled to reject the Logos theory in its fundamental character, as we yesterday rejected Paul's scheme.

"Most Jews would give their assent to the proposition of Plato and others, that by the word Logos is meant the summing up of Jehovah's 'attribute of Reason, or Divine Word.' I would think, however, that the word 'Love' ought to have been linked with it, thereby magnifying and summing up Jehovah's two most exalted attributes.

"The moment, however, that the new-born Alexandrian school tries to break up fresh ground by persuading people that the Logos is not an 'attribute' of Jehovah, but that

it stands for the highest being in existence—namely, an imaginary second Jehovah, represented as a Son of Jehovah—it will raise fierce opposition from all orthodox Jews.

"Such an opposition might be expected, for I need not tell you that such a claim would overthrow the Jews' most cherished and sacred conviction; indeed, it is the immovable foundation upon which their faith for thousands of years has rested, and for the truth of which every pious Jew would willingly sacrifice his life. As you know so well, to the Jews there is no more infallible truth, and they believe therefore that for the defence of their monotheistic faith Jehovah called them to be a nation among polytheistic worshippers. This faith of the Jews believes in the unity, the Oneness of Jehovah, who, as you know, is the Almighty One, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, clothed in absolute sovereignty and majesty; He is also the supreme, self-existing One, who is the only source of all finite existence, bound by nothing but His own almighty power, infinite wisdom, and transcendent love

and goodness—who rules the world in righteousness, mercy, and truth, and who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, without images of any sort. His worship is therefore a spiritual one, and the only true one. The new teaching about the Logos must therefore, in the eye of every pious Jew, be nothing less than a blasphemous utterance, which they will reject with abhorrence; and the author of which, they no doubt think, ought to be stoned to death, according to the law of Moses.

"So much for the reception of this new doctrine by our countrymen who are sound in the faith of Moses.

"As for the Gentiles, however, there should be little difficulty in getting them to give credence to such a claim, for, being Polytheists, it is quite in conformity with the faith in which they have been brought up; and therefore, if the new sect makes progress, it will be among the latter.

"Now, some of you may ask me, if this new Logos theory has to be rejected as unfounded and derogatory to Jehovah, who shares His

throne with no one, how can you explain that this conception of a Logos has gained ground among so many nations in antiquity, also among the wise Greeks, as well as by the celebrated philosopher Philo and among the Alexandrian Jews?

"Well, my reply in a few words is this, that by a mistaken religious and superstitious awe of Jehovah, the august, ever-living Creator, humanity everywhere (except with the Jews) have come to look more and more upon Him in His transcendency only. In consequence, His worshippers have relegated Him to a distant sphere, where in His awful majesty and glory He is kept quite apart from any direct association with a material world, with all its sins and imperfections, its rebellious subjects, its sorrows and its wretchedness.

"In far-away-lying India we have had for ages the most developed spectacle of this, where Brahm is too high and lofty to be worshipped direct but only through intermediaries. Likewise in other countries nearer home, this tendency is also fundamental.

"The great chasm between God and the world was therefore bridged by philosophers, who posited mediating spirits or entities; as it were hypostases—some personal, others impersonal, but all distinct from God, and yet of His essence. As a natural consequence, this theory led to a refined Polytheism among the philosophers, and to a gross Polytheism among the uncultured classes, which means the bulk of mankind over the whole earth—except in our Holy Land.

"Now we come to the new view, to which Simeon has referred. It has its rise, as said, in the philosophical school of Alexandria, by Jews converted to our Messiah cult; but, being also adherents of Philo, and wishing to carry their master's admired system to its full completion, they have simply transferred his teaching of the Logos, as the incarnate Messiah or Christ—as is also found in the Book of Enoch and other earlier works—to the Christian cult; by which they expect to make it the universal faith of mankind, if not among the Jews, at least among all Gentiles.

"We may admire their ambition, but must set aside as unfounded and untrue the plausible theory of making our Christ a very God of very God, *i.e.* the Second Person in a blessed Trinity.

"Jealous of Jehovah's holy name being taken in vain by this fanciful speculation, I am compelled to join issue with the orthodox Jews and firmly stand up for a pure Monotheism, such as is only found in Judaism. The conception, moreover, of the Logos theory is quite unnecessary and superfluous, when we take the trouble to study the question properly, as it is seen in the threefold aspects of Jehovah; in which only the whole truth will be found—and much grander and nobler, too, than in the invention of the imaginary Logos theory.

"It may take me a little time to make it clear to you, but it is worth the trouble. I shall therefore treat of Jehovah:—

1*st.* In His Transcendency.

2*nd.* In His Immanence.

3*rd.* In His Personality.

## GOD'S TRANSCENDENCY

"We must take this threefold view in order to bring Jehovah within the focus of human cognisance—not only to grasp the conception by the intellect, but also thereby to enshrine Jehovah in our hearts.

"Therefore, shortly stated, in the first aspect of Jehovah's transcendency: He is necessarily absolutely inconceivable to any other being but Himself; for there must be in Him an infinity of perfections, of which human beings can have no conception. Therefore Jehovah, in infinite ways, must transcend the powers of apprehension possessed by finite minds. In other words, Jehovah in the first aspect of His perfection is a reality, transcending man's highest thoughts or ideals. He is the source and the explanation of the universe, with an infinite plenitude of powers and glory—to which the creation of one world or numberless worlds can add nothing: the uncaused Cause of all existence, the uniting principle implied in

all multiplicity. In short, we may sum it up by saying that God is an infinite being, with infinite attributes—all perfect.

## GOD'S IMMANENCE

"In the second place, we have to consider Jehovah's immanence in a twofold aspect; first, as seen in Nature, and secondly, in the soul of man.

"First, let me posit, that the infinite is found within the finite, while yet transcending it.

"The immanence of Jehovah in Nature, for instance, is shown by the intelligent purpose pervading it. It must therefore be posited as a self-evident axiom that the more Nature is studied, the more it will be seen that an all-pervading, all-sustaining, all-evolving God must be its source, its object, its centre, its circumference, and its end. God is further seen to be immanent in Nature, for wherever there is existence there is also found evidence of wisdom, power, and love. In

this aspect God is not so much to be conceived as the unchanged Being of existence, as the manifested One in His ceaseless activity; ever evolving, dissolving, and re-evolving the universe in which He is immanent, in ever higher, more beautiful, and more valuable forms. The Cosmos is simply the continuous manifestation and product of the Divine activity. We may find God everywhere in the world He has created and rules, in all life, in all the forms and manifestations of will, wisdom, and power revealed in His undeviated and uniform laws by which He administers the order and well-being of the Cosmos.

"There is no need, therefore, to seek for a medium or a Divine Logos, to whom Jehovah would hand over the creation of the world. Jehovah is one and the only Creator and Upholder in the laws He has ordained. Everything that the soul can desire or require for time or eternity is found in Jehovah, whether in creation, in providence, or in grace.

"In short, Jehovah is immanent in the

world, and the whole creation is dependent upon and is ever upheld by the ever-loving, ever-present, ever-working Jehovah, the ground and source of All that is or ever will be. He is the sole Creator of the world, and His glory He will not give or share with another.

## GOD'S IMMANENCE IN THE SOUL

"Let us next consider the interesting aspect of Jehovah's immanence in the soul. It is the highest we know. It is felt as a loving purpose, the inspirer of every good thought and word, of every holy desire cherished, and in every loving deed performed. The heart with its most fervent love, the will with its noblest resolves, man's highest aspirations, all arise from God's immanence in the soul. God is thereby forming the soul more and more in likeness to Himself, in His moral and spiritual excellence and perfections. Finally, it is when Divine love is in the heart that man is brought into complete adjustment in the moral and spiritual order under

which the soul lives now and will live for ever.

"It is through this union with God who is immanent in the heart as a co-worker, not only in this life, but through eternal ages, that the soul begins and continues a progressive development in true self-culture and true soul-affection; so that it gradually becomes more like God in His beautiful character, aspirations, and purposes, to be a fount of universal blessings to the world. For active love is the world-conquering and world-transforming power. The higher immanence of God in the soul of man has not only expulsive power to cast out what is imperfect and debased, but also impulsive and expansive power to widen human sympathies and scatter blessings broadcast over the earth.

## GOD'S SUPRA-PERSONALITY

"I shall be obliged to treat of this aspect a little more fully, because so many cultured people among the pagans are nowadays Pan-

theists, who deny the personality of God. It is high time that this dangerous error was exposed, for it strikes at the root of all personal religion. Our object of true worship must be a personal God. We must place a Being with reason, will, and power, back of all matter, law, and resources, creating, constituting, and co-ordinating them in their wondrous adaptation, utility, and beauty; in short, a personal existence, who guides and controls everything.

"Let us bear in mind that the supra-personal God in whom we believe is distinguished, on the one hand, from all forms of Polytheism, to which the one-sided aspect of God's immanence is apt to lead people; while, on the other hand, it is also distinguished from pantheistic forms of thoughts, to which the one-sided aspect of God's transcendency is apt to lead people.

"Supra-personality is not used in any sense of limitation. In this aspect Jehovah is seen not as an abstraction, but as the living, loving, active, productive, and personal supreme Being of the universe.

"As truly as God is incomprehensible in His essence, so truly is God revealed in His manifestations—not only in Nature but also in the soul of man.

"Now, it is not only God's supra-personality, but the near and dear relationship which may be established between God and the soul, which draws out man's highest sentiments of love and affections, and which only are able to satisfy the soul's highest aspirations. Jehovah to the soul becomes not only an inward model of grace and perfection, but also an inward motive born out of admiration, gratitude, and love; therefore, not only an inward authority, but also an inward constraint and inspiration. It is Love's response to Love.

"In all higher faiths, it is the idea of the Divine as moral order and perfect spiritual attractive beauty of character which underlies them. In short, it is the growing idea of moral and spiritual perfection.

"Again, human personality can only exist on condition of a negation, but not so we must conceive of the supra-personality of

God. It is true that God is partially reflected in Nature, but God is best reflected—and in a higher way and fulness—in the human soul. God possesses all the attributes of personality, and likely an infinitude of still higher attributes as well. His essence excludes only its limitations. In other words, the perfections of God are therefore those of our own souls, but He possesses them without bounds, and probably infinitely more than we have any conception of.

"In this idea of supra-personality we have the meeting-point of all philosophy. The true conception we must form is that there is a necessary and eternal co-existence of the finite and the infinite.

"We need not try to find out what is the human mind in *itself*, or the Divine in *itself;* but rather what is the *relation* and the connection of the two, *i.e.* what God is to *us* and *we* are to God.

"Although man may be said to be made in the image of God, it is wrong to say that man is the *measure* of God; and yet, this

lies at the root of many false theories of God.

"Where God is conceived as the Supra-Personal One, there arises a religion of affectional devotion which satisfies our longings for perfection and blessedness, and which finite things and finite persons cannot confer upon us. Only a supra-personal God can satisfy the soul's deepest feelings and longings to realise a perfect ideal.

"The likeness to this ideal is the goal of all mental, moral, and religious progress, for God in His beauty and perfection is the presupposition of all elevating ideals of the human soul. The more our souls become moral and spiritual, the more like God they grow and the higher our personality advances.

"We do not become one with the Divine in the sense of losing our individuality or personality, but we may become one in the divine, moral, and spiritual beauty, as our lower nature is transmuted into a higher one. Personality is a concept which stretches into the infinite. The law of continuity is

not broken; it is simply extended. The personality is not lost; it rather has taken on larger proportions and become more individualised, for our limited individuality is only a temporary form of the soul.

"The highest perfection is the greatest likeness to God's beautiful and perfect character; not this life, therefore, only, but a transfigured and eternal life is our goal. Man possesses, as distinctive from the lower creation, a sense of the Divine. This is his inherent and inalienable birthright.

"The purer moral and spiritual conceptions of the Divine arise from an idealisation and perfection of the moral elements which man finds within his own inner consciousness; so we see, in that growing idea of moral perfection, the revelation of the Absolute, and thus we find God in man and man in God.

"While we are only relatively personal, God is the real person. We are parts of a developing whole, all enfolded in an embracing and interpenetrating love. We cannot, as

reasonable beings, believe in a loveless, a purposeless, and a hopeless existence.

"As already explained, God must be conceived as supra-personal, conscious, and ethical. Man cannot have his personality absorbed into God, as the Pantheist teaches; nor God individualised in man, as the Polytheist teaches. But in God the soul may find an eternal and loving communion, a personal God who can sympathise with the soul.

"We must focus the aspect of God from His transcendency and immensity, which is beyond our earthly vision, into a supra-personality.

"As said already, personality is the very highest conception of the human mind, and existence cannot be explained if there is at the heart of things an impersonal principle; for that would give us an unintelligible world. The Infinite must have its counterpart in the region of our own personality, and can only be interpreted in terms of a person. It is a necessity of thought that the Supreme must be the 'I am' personality, a living reason, will,

and love. The highest existence is still to us the highest personality.

"The universe is found to be a creation for the service and expression of mind. It is intelligible to the mind, because the same Divine intelligence created both man and it.

"Existence cannot be fully explained by an abstract or a transcendent God, but only through a personal God. Nature is found to be an intellectual whole as well as a moral and spiritual whole, a system of benevolent foresight and mutual ministration.

"By union with God is not meant absorption, as taught by the Hindu thinkers, but such a union as shall secure the permanence of man's personality and individuality—nay, even intensify them.

"To feel as one with God is not to be God, as affirmed by many mystics. It is only meant that God and man are in harmonious adjustment. God would still exist, although we did not exist. The Cosmos would still exist, although we passed away.

"God's highest immanence in the soul of

man shows itself in the God-like moral and spiritual beauty it inspires in a man's character. The highest form of nature we know of is man with his ideals, aspirations, and his capacity of communion with the source of his being. Thus the earthly life is transmuted into a higher form of life, transcending the present, making it grander, more wonderful, more beautiful, more lovable, and more divine.

## SUMMARY

"Let me close with the following considerations. God's supra-personality is an idealisation and perfection of the spiritual and moral elements which man finds within his own inner consciousness. Therefore, to conceive Jehovah as a person, we must attribute to Him, to an infinite extent and perfection, what constitutes the excellencies of a human soul with its highest thoughts and will, its capacities for love, harmony, and joy; otherwise it will be found impossible to bring God in His beautiful attributes within the focus

of the human mind. Yet the supra-personal God is not limited, mutable, or imperfect, as is human personality. He is infinite and perfect, while the other is finite and imperfect; yet humanity in one sense is sublime in its very imperfections, in view of the endless progress before it towards higher and loftier states of Beinghood. We may say that individuals are, as it were, cells in a spiritual organism, the soul of which is God.

"Humanity is ever reaching towards greater likeness of soul, in spiritual beauty and perfection, to the Fountain Head; not a progress single-handed, but a *co-operation*. And the perfect Being is the co-worker with the soul of man, in the struggle towards a higher, a fuller, and happier life; founded upon love, lived in love, and therefore with eternal happiness, satisfaction, and joy as its goal. In this conception the soul finds its consolations, its yearnings satisfied; yea, its strength, comfort, joy, and happiness.

"Let me say, further, that Jehovah is the only true and perfect personality, whereas

in humanity is only found the potentiality, the first outlines, the embryo of what true and perfect personality represents. It is quite true that God's supra-personality fails in fully expressing God's nature, but it is the most complete expression we are capable of formulating; for we know nothing higher in this world than human personality, therefore every other view must be infinitely farther from the truth."

The Superior seemed tired after his address, having given it with his usual fire and eloquence. At times he seemed even carried away with his subject, especially at the peroration.

Simeon, with all the brethren present, expressed to the Superior their thanks and gratitude for having explained so fully his views of Jehovah's immanence, &c.—and by which he had set aside, as false and useless, the hypothetical Logos theory.

The aged Superior said, with a smile, to Levi:—"In one sense I may have satisfied your keen, inquiring mind, but I feel that

there is still something that you wish to have made clear to you. Tell me frankly what it is."

Levi replied:—"Revered Master, you have read my soul, and spoken the truth. In spite of all that is said, I am still wishful to know how sin against a God of justice and holiness can be forgiven without the shedding of blood—as in Jerusalem, say, with the sacrificial system of a yearly recurring expiation by shedding of animal blood. We have also Paul's theory of the second Adam's own sacrifice as being sufficient for all time coming, by the shedding of divine blood; and now we have the Alexandrian school's explanation. But still I am not clear on the subject. If we have not the annual sacrifice at Jerusalem, or the Messiah's sacrifice on Golgotha, for the sins of the world, what, after all, is really left upon which we can trust for the forgiveness of our sins and our soul's happiness in the life to come? Will not the 'spiritual' sacrifice of the Logos be the truest explanation of them all?"

The Superior replied :—" I see the difficulty you have, of choosing between these various conflicting views. If I am able to-morrow, I shall try to explain to you the subject bearing upon Evil and Sin. I will also give you some thoughts bearing upon death and immortality. Perhaps the suggestions which I am able to offer may clear up the schemes of Redemption and Satisfaction to you."

Levi thanked the aged Saint for his kind promise. As they were on the point of parting, Reuben approached and expressed a desire that the Superior would favour him with some further thoughts bearing on the soul's communion with Jehovah, in light of what he had already said regarding God's Immanence. The Superior kindly promised that, if he felt able for the exertion, he would also try to meet this wish on the following day.

## THE SOUL'S COMMUNION WITH GOD

When the brethren met the following afternoon, the Superior addressed those present, and said:—"We have to-day to deal with some questions about which our friends Reuben and Levi have asked my opinion. I shall handle these questions not in set speeches, but in a series of reflections and short sayings, which may be best remembered by my audience. Let us therefore, in the first place, consider the Soul's Communion with God.

"We saw yesterday that besides the Divine immanence in Nature, it had also to be sought in the soul of man. We saw that this Divine immanence had a *personal* aspect, and it is only in this that love can arise in the heart of man towards the source of his being. God can only reveal Himself to our souls in the sphere of the Human, for we

cannot have a personal revelation of God by gazing on the stars or by admiring a beautiful sunset.

"It will be found that it is only by love that man gets the power and inclination to shape his life and conduct according to the highest concept he can form of God, Whom he has come to admire and love, and wishes to imitate to the best of his power.

"Indeed, the essence of love is divine, for the first principle of love is in God; hence, nothing is purer and more divine than joy, in the possession of the perfect life of love. It is this heart-impelling love which revolutionises the life; a new life-centre of heaven-born love is formed; a change of spiritual personality with higher qualities, higher aims, and a higher destiny; a spiritual oneness, not a oneness with God in essential essence—but one with God in spiritual nature; a partaker of the divine nature of love, a oneness in common interests, common aspirations, common glory.

"If we say that we are God's image, it

can only be to the extent that we can respond and reproduce in our minds that which He has initiated, in order that we may be evolved to higher grades of being. A consecrated life is one which realises itself in a higher life, because transmuted by love's alchemy.

"It is true that man is an organ for the expression of a higher life than aught else around him; yet, God cannot possibly be expressed wholly in us, in our limitations, in our poverty of thought and language.

"It may be truly said that the whole Cosmos is, as it were, God's mirror, which in some faint manner reflects back His glory; even as every dewdrop, illuminated by the sun, gives back to Him in part His own perfections. In this reflection humanity is the much greater debtor than the rest of the visible creation around us, considering its more involved spiritual powers, which enable it to respond to higher spiritual forces. In this cosmic process, we see the unfolding of a continually increasing power to respond

according to the implanted life, and which thereby realises itself in a higher mode of Being.

"Man is so constituted that nothing finite can suffice him; beyond the universe he is in search of an ideal of beauty, a perfect object of love, trust, and adoration. In other words, in consequence of the soul partaking of the Divine Nature, it is ever seeking God as the complement of its life and the perfection of its Beinghood. This is also shown by the instinctive stretching forth of the soul towards the beautiful, the true, the good, and the infinite. In proportion, therefore, as the soul is gradually being filled with the Divine spirit, it becomes more and more in full accord with the life and harmony of the universe.

"This struggle of man towards the Infinite is the origin of religion and of philosophical systems. The immortal desire of perfecting and beautifying life bestows new splendour and strength upon the soul, which realises its oneness in nature to an all-perfect, supremely

adorable Being, who possesses all possible perfections and all distinct from the universe; for God in one aspect of His Beinghood is a complete and self-sufficing Being.

"These thoughts lead us to another lesson. This is the soul's near and dear relation to God, and that the soul's constant communion with God will be the source of its choicest happiness, its ever-flowing joys, and its true progress in Beinghood here and hereafter.

"It is to the deep, all-pervading religious sense, combined with the poetical temperament, that this conception has taken its root in the human race and among its choicest spirits.

"Let me repeat, it is this near and dear communion with the source of our being which gives the only true pleasure that elevates; the one deep source of happiness that never fails and never palls, the one source of joy that is never exhausted, the one fountain of bliss that never runs dry. The only perfection worth striving after, that which harmonises us with the one Self of All, is that sublime goal which that Self has willed and the realisa-

tion of which is in the participation of His Divine bliss.

"From the inflow of God's love into our heart, results the outflow of our love to others. Thus arises the self-sacrificing love which is the essential thing in the character of every one of his followers. Let us remember that the divine life is rooted in love and in the joy and spiritual beauty that love gives.

"In the true religion, the ideal is lifted up as the only means whereby the present life of humanity may be improved, whether in the moral, social, industrial, or intellectual progress; everything that makes for beauty and for the beautification of life. This world is also beautified by the regeneration of character and the self-sacrificing spirit which heals the sores of the world and binds up the broken-hearted and those fallen on the way; for what is important in human progress is an ideal which may kindle enthusiasm rather than a power to overawe. Thus the spirit of progress is the essence of religion. The old religions lack this principle of progress.

"The dignity of our moral being is to cause harmony to reign in our inclinations, our actions, our lives, in all parts of our nature. We are enchanted by the holy harmonies which are called wisdom, justice, and truth. The soul cannot lose its essence—which is activity, or its laws which are for progress, or the attainment and possession of its eternal and infinite ideal.

"On the other hand, we must expand our thought of man from his present low estate to the transcending aspect of an immortal spirit, with affinities to the Divine Spirit of All; so that the twain in a mutual way may become one for evermore in the sense of mutual love, communion, and spiritual likeness.

"In other words, the finite self finds itself related to the Highest Self, which becomes enthroned within, as the soul's most precious and joyful possession; it is also the sharer of the soul's sorrows and its joys, the Beloved to whom the soul surrenders itself and in whom only its highest happiness is obtained and consummated.

"Our communion with God must take place through love, as also through God's unfailing mercy; through the conscience, through active co-operation with God, in bringing in the reign of love and righteousness. Let us also remember that God's love towards humanity is a wise and discriminating love, whose aim is to make humanity lovable and like Himself—not selfish or unlovely.

"Leaving out here considerations of God's transcendency, in which I believe He is not only the All in All, but also the One above All—and referring again to God's immanence in Nature—let me close by saying that He is not seen as standing in relation to it as a Sculptor to the statue (which was the ancient conception), but as the ever-living, ever-pulsing, ever-present life in Existence. He is present either potentially, or partially revealed, in His glorious and perfect attributes; in every atom, as in every soul. In the material, as in the spiritual; ever working, ever evolving, dissolving, re-evolving to higher and still higher manifestations of

life, and therefore to still higher bliss—in carrying out His far-reaching plans of enthroning at last in matchless glory the souls dear to Him, radiant like Himself in Divine beauty, never-ceasing love, and perfect bliss.

"Hence it follows that the God whom the true spiritual worshippers adore and love has the honour of the whole Existence, being the Source of it all; as well as its preserver, and the only one to whom the soul can render true and heartful worship by the perfection of His attributes and the Divine beauty of His character.

"The train of thought to which this sublime contemplation necessarily leads us is that the true conception of the world, as already stated, is the unitary or monistic one.

"This conception keeps equally clear of Pantheism on the one hand, and of Atheism on the other hand. Idealism and Realism are seen in their true perspectives, from this point of view. It likewise keeps equally clear from 'Ontology,' which is an over-valuation

of reason; and from 'mysticism,' which is an under-valuation of reason.

"Upon this little globe of earthly existence we abide for a short period, preparatory to a spiritual exodus to higher realms; feeling that we are divine elements in a divine order—realising also in some dim way the Divinity within us, which testifies to the soul's dignity, its powers and possibilities, as co-eternal with an Eternal Being.

"Meantime, we live here between two cosmic worlds, of both of which we have only a fragmentary knowledge: on the one hand, the remote and majestic world of starry systems; and on the other, the not less magnificent and wonderful worlds of atomic and ether systems—all, from the smallest to the most colossal, instinct with formative and vital powers for the purpose of advancing life to higher degrees of excellence. The inherent properties bestowed by God make the universe what it is, and what it will yet become—under the guidance and superintendence of the immanent Divinity.

"Thus all existence is but one great continuous whole; all differences are but variety in unity. All are working for progress, for the higher developments of Beauty, Wisdom, Truth, and Righteousness; and for deeper and fuller bliss, by the soul's acquiring a greater likeness to God in His lovable, beautiful, and perfect character, and by the nearer and dearer union with Him in an ever-deepening affection, and that, time without end."

The Superior closed the subject by saying:—"Summing up our remarks, our dear brother Levi will have seen that the soul's communion with God is a direct one—without the aid of priests, temples, or sacrifices by blood; whether human or animal, the communion being based solely upon the soul's love, admiration, absolute trust, and holy delight in our heavenly, lovable Father and Creator.

"From what I have said, you will see that such a consecrated faith and communion shed a beautiful radiance over one's life. Its keynote is the essential divinity of humanity, for we must believe in the divine possi-

bility of all men. If such a divine life involves at times self-renunciation, it is only as regards the lower nature; and the object is thereby to attain the sublimer heights of a more glorious self-fulfilment. Again, if we are called to make sacrifices for others or offer our selfhood upon the altar of duty and love, it is because we must realise ourselves as a part of a whole, and that sacrifices on behalf of the whole are the best attestation we can give of our love to God and man; and you know that the signs of true love are that it gives itself unsought, unasked—for love is always a gift, never payment of a debt.

"Now let us turn our thoughts to the other subjects, namely, Sin, Death, and Immortality. I happened to treat of these on a former occasion when the Hindu Rabbi Ananda and our dear brother Jesus were with us. I shall therefore now ask our brother Reuben to read the manuscript for me, as it is rather long and I feel unable for the further exertion."

Reuben was just on the point of commencing to read the MS. when the meeting was broken up by the aged Superior having fallen in a fainting fit, and he was removed to his cell. The manuscript was therefore left with Reuben, to be read on a subsequent occasion.[1]

[1] See "Transformed Hinduism," vol. ii. pp. 232–262.

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